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ABSTRACT

Since December, 1975, the California State Department of Education has administered the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) five times. Students who pass the exam may leave school as early as two years before they would otherwise be permitted to. This study focused on four specific areas: (1) an overview to provide the legislative and implementation background and to expore the climate which led to the concept of an "early-out" exam; (2) questionnaires, given to a sample of the December, 1975, examinees concerning: who would take the exam, why, and what qualities and experiences would they have; (3) questionnaires mailed to all high schools in the state to explore the school response to the CHSPE program and to those students who take the exam; and (4) a structured interview administered to a sample of district superintendents and school principals. Results indicate that the CHSPE program has worked well for a few individuals, saved the state nearly 5 million dollars in the first year of its operation, and had a negligible impact on the schools. As long as the severe financial disincentive to the schools persists, these program outcomes will likely remain unaltered. The most effective way to increase participation would be to increase publicity about the CHSPE. (Author/CTM)

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The California High School Proficiency Examination: A First Year Evaluation

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March 1978

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1. STUDY DESIGN AND SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in December, 1975, the California State Department of Education has administered the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) five times. Students who pass the exam may, with parental permission, leave school up to two years before they would otherwise be permitted to. Because of its potential effects on the largest secondary education system in the United States, the CHSPE program has generated considerable interest on the part of policy makers and the public alike. This study is the first major effort to provide a substantial basis for understanding the CHSPE program's origin, intents, content, initial experience, and secondary school response.

This study focused on four specific areas described below by the methodological techniques best suited to each:

- An historical overview to provide the legislative and implementation background and to explore the climate which led to the innovative concept of an "early-out" exam.
- Questionnaires, given to a sample of the December, 1975, examinees. The questions which have most frequently arisen concerning the CHSPE program have been: Who, among those eligible, would take the exam?; Why would they do so?; and What qualities and experiences would those who passed and those who failed, respectively, have in common?

- Questionnaires which were mailed to all high schools in the state to explore the school response to both the CHSPE program and to those students who take the exam. Common questions were: From what source did the school learn of the CHSPE?; How was information about the CHSPE disseminated in the schools?; What were the attitudes of various groups or individuals in the schools regarding the CHSPE?; What curricular changes occurred as a result of the CHSPE?; and What was the nature of the interaction between school authorities and students regarding the CHSPE?
- A structured interview instrument which was given to a sample of district superintendents and school principals to elicit those responses not easily obtainable on a mail survey instrument and to solicit expressions of local policy and opinion regarding the CHSPE program.

Study Design

The major data-gathering components of the study were designed with three primary groups as targets: the December, 1975 CHSPE administration cohort; those school personnel in secondary schools who would be likely to know the most about the CHSPE program; and, top administrators in the districts and schools. The choices that examinees made in the year and a half between the exam and the survey (and are still making), whether they passed the exam or not, clearly have implications for curriculum development and counseling strategies.

Knowledge of examinee characteristics (type of school attended, grade level, socio-economic status, and so forth) is the desiderata from which programmatic changes ensue. The school response to the CHSPE program largely determines the "success" of the program, since the schools largely control practical "access" to the program. Top administrators set the policy and influence the school-level response to the CHSPE program--these policies (or lack of them), opinions, and school level modus operandi are the basic elements of school response.

Examinee characteristics component. The aim of this component of the study was to describe the examinee population, to determine what did happen to a sample of the December, 1975, cohort, and to assess what effect the exam had had in terms of the various options the examinees subsequently exericised. The selected examinees were contacted nearly 15 months after taking the CHSPE and were questioned on demographic variables, affective variables, variables dealing with external influence on their lives, and variables relating to the decision making process.

A 10 percent stratified sample was randomly selected from the group of approximately 12,000 examinees who took the CHSPE in December, 1975. The stratum was pass/fail status on the exam: The pass rate was 45 percent (n=5,400), thus 540 passers and 660 non-passers were selected to receive questionnaires. The questionnaire was field tested in January and February and mailed to members of the sample on February 24, 1977.

School survey component. The way in which the CHSPE program, as an innovative element, weaves its way into the school structure is the salient issue around which this phase of the study revolved. How the schools accommodate the CHSPE program, given the powerful financial disincentives, largely determines the "success" of the program in the sense of presenting a true option to students. If large numbers of students are aware of the CHSPE and perceive it as a realistic alternative, then the schools must adjust accordingly, presumably in the areas of counseling and curricular revision. Lack of student interest may stem from a number of factors, most of them under the control of the schools.

A school questionnaire was constructed in an attempt to elicit the relationship between the CHSPE program and a variety of school related variables. The questionnaire was field tested in January and sent to all schools during the period February 24 through March 1, 1977. Questionnaires were sent to 1,654 public and private high schools, among which were 1,280 public high schools, including public junior/senior high schools, senior high schools, evening and adult high schools, and continuation high schools, and 374 private high schools. The questionnaire was directed to the person in each high school most knowledgeable about the CHSPE. In 42 percent of the cases this was a (or the) guidance counselor; in 30 percent of the cases this was the principal. Generally, guidance counselors know more about

the "nuts and bolts" of the CHSPE than do any other individuals in the school; and counselors presumably also reflect school policy.

Personal interview component. District and school personnel interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of April, 1977, in an attempt to elicit responses not easily obtainable on a mail questionnaire and to obtain information directly from high-level administrators. The interview target group consisted of a sample of 30 district superintendents and 30 high school principals. The purpose of this effort was not to contact the person most knowledgeable about the CHSPE, but to contact the individual who was the spokesperson for district or school policy. Knowledge of the attitudes of these top administrators toward the CHSPE program is crucial in assessing the CHSPE's impact on the schools.

An interview instrument was constructed to obtain both fact and opinion from the interviewees. Questions were generated from screenings of the initial responses from the school questionnaires, as well as from considerations of district/school policy. The result was a 33-question structured schedule with most responses pre-coded and comments solicited on each question.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Examinees. While there is probably no "typical" CHSPE examinee, certain trends emerge from an examination of the characteristics of the average respondee. In the summary which follows, some characteristics of the December, 1975, sample are summarized and highlighted as being, more or less, representative of CHSPE cohorts.

- Slightly more females (55 percent) than males (45 percent) took the CHSPE.
- The pass rate for males was higher than for females, although, since the November, 1976, administration, females have passed at a higher rate than males.
- The majority (87 percent) of examinees reported themselves as white, while only 1 percent reported themselves as black and 2 percent reported themselves as hispanic.
- The pass rate among examinees increased as a function of greater educational attainment by their parents.
- The passing rate for examinees was highest among those who reported their father's occupation as "professional" and lowest among those who reported their father's occupation as "unskilled" or "unemployed."
- Slightly more than one-third reported living in a

small town or city (not a suburb); 28 percent in a residential part of a large city; and 26 percent in a suburb. The highest pass rate occurred among suburban dwellers and the lowest pass rate occurred among those who reside in the inner part of large cities.

- One-half the examinees reported they learned the most about the CHSPE from their school counselor.
- Examinee's parents and peers were more encouraging than school officials in giving advice on whether to take the CHSPE.
- The majority of examinees (80 percent) were attending regular daytime high school; 12 percent were attending continuation high school; and 6 percent were not attending school.
- About two-thirds of the sample took the CHSPE even though they believed they would graduate on schedule with their class.
- Nearly one-half the sample had paying jobs at the time they took the CHSPE, and this group had a higher pass rate than those who did not have paying jobs.
- Almost all (94 percent) of the sample examinees lived with their families.
- Somewhat more than 80 percent of the sample reported that not liking high school motivated them to take the CHSPE.
- Approximately 10 percent of the sample reported they

had ("to a great extent") to leave high school to earn money.

- Fewer than 20 percent of the sample reported the possibility of increased freedom within the school environment motivated them "to a great extent" to take the CHSPE.
- Nearly two-thirds of the sample replied they were motivated "to a great extent" to take the CHSPE in order to gain the option of leaving school early.
- Nearly two-thirds of the sample passers reported their performance on the December CHSPE affected their work or school situation within the few months following the exam. Most of the changes related to working, searching for a job, or attending college (predominantly community college).
- Approximately 7 percent of the sample passed the December CHSPE and received a regular diploma. This percentage probably increased slightly as a result of the June, 1977, graduation which included some of the December, 1975, mid-year juniors.
- The CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency is generally accepted on an equal basis with the regular high school diploma. Among those 1975 examinees who had experience with either the acceptance or non-acceptance of the CHSPE certificate vis-a-vis a regular diploma, only a few reported they found the CHSPE certificate not in parity with a regular

diploma for the following situations: getting into school, 10 percent; getting into the military, 8 percent; and getting a job, 12 percent.

- Most (75 percent) of the passers left school earlier than they otherwise would have, as a result of passing the CHSPE. More twelfth-grade passers (89 percent) than eleventh-grade passers (68 percent) left within one month of receiving their results.
- The majority (80 percent) of the passers easily obtained parental permission to leave school.
- Those passers (25 percent) who chose to remain in school chose, for the most part, not to disrupt their normal school pattern and took all the required courses for graduation.
- Approximately one-fourth of those who failed the December, 1975, CHSPE re-took the exam in March, 1976, with a pass rate of 37 percent.
- Slightly less than one-third of the non-passers who did not re-take the CHSPE indicated their decision was based in part on their perception that the CHSPE certificate was not equivalent to a regular diploma.
- One-quarter of the non-passers went on to receive a regular high school diploma.
- Examinees displayed a pervasive less-than-favorable attitude toward high school, with no difference in this regard between passers and non-passers. School

grade point average is the only variable which showed a statistically significant difference on a school attitude scale--those with higher grades had more positive attitudes toward school.

- Passers had higher self-esteem than non-passers.

School survey. The following are the major findings from the school survey component:

- Most of the publicity about the CHSPE in the schools consisted of posting the CHSPE Information Bulletin. More aggressive means of publicizing (e.g., loudspeaker announcements, talks given in class) were used sparingly.
- School personnel reported more "below average" than "bright" students interested in the CHSPE.
- School personnel, in general, did not allow any relaxation of requirements for those who passed the CHSPE and remained in school.
- Nearly one-fifth of those school personnel who responded detected an increase in self-confidence among students who passed the CHSPE and remained in school.
- Two-thirds of the school personnel supported the policy of not releasing the names of non-passers.
- One-third of the survey respondents reported an increase in requests for study help and requests for guidance among those who did not pass the CHSPE.

- Nearly all (94 percent) school personnel reported that their schools had not modified their curricula as a result of the CHSPE program.
- Questionnaire respondents reported that among various groups in the school, guidance counselors and students were the most favorable toward the CHSPE.
- Three-fourths of the school personnel respondents indicated that loss of CHSPE passers and subsequent revenue losses were not viewed as a problem in their schools.
- Continuation high school respondents were generally more positive, more flexible in their attitude toward examinees, more willing to provide instructional opportunities for potential examinees, and less concerned about losses of per-student state aid than regular high school respondees.

District and school interview. The following are the results of personal interviews with 60 administrators:

- Top administrators perceived the CHSPE as generally antithetical to local desires: Administrators have no control over who takes the test nor do they control the content of the exam.
- The sample of district superintendents and school principals typically viewed the CHSPE as an alternative for those students who were unable to adapt to the school environment--they were less enthusiastic

about their "brighter" students opting to take the CHSPE.

- The administrators did not place the state-issued CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency on a par with their local diplomas. However, nearly half indicated they believed individuals who passed the CHSPE were as qualified to enter the labor market as those who were awarded a local diploma.
- Nearly all the top administrators reported that loss of state aid, as a result of CHSPE passers leaving early, was negligible. This finding represents a significant change in attitude since December, 1975: More than half the respondees recalled that in December, 1975, they believed revenue losses resulting from CHSPE early leavers would be a problem.
- Nearly three-fourths of those interviewed agreed the CHSPE should place emphasis on problems dealing with daily living.
- Most of the interviewees did not believe the CHSPE would be a major influence in their districts or schools in the next few years.

Conclusions

It is an inescapable conclusion that the CHSPE program has generally not significantly modified the school environment. There are some situations (e.g., declining enrollment) in which the CHSPE program exacerbates the problems; there are

other areas (e.g., counseling) where the existence of the CHSPE has aided the schools. Generally, though, the impact of the CHSPE program from the school's point of view is minimal. There are no arcane reasons why such is the case--indeed, the explanation is manifest: The financial disincentives are compelling enough as to effectively preclude a positive response by the schools. During the last two years, the school attitude toward the CHSPE program has gone from deep concern to insouciance--a reflection of the CHSPE's perceived and actual threat to the status quo. The school response from the CHSPE program's inception, has been to adopt a passive attitude regarding the publicity about the CHSPE.

The CHSPE program has not attracted great numbers of examinees for many reasons, some related to school response and some not. Lack of aggressive publicity about the CHSPE guarantees a low turnout and minimal intrusion into established school policy. However, many students elect not to take the CHSPE or not to leave school after passing the CHSPE for reasons such as peer pressure, the condition of the labor market, and parental influence, among many others. Of those who have taken the CHSPE and passed, most (75 percent) have elected to leave school; however, this percentage would probably change given that a more representative group would take the CHSPE under a different publicizing strategy.

The CHSPE program has worked well for nearly 23,000 individuals under 18 who have passed the CHSPE. Most reported that

they took the CHSPE to provide an option to traditional paths. The CHSPE program has been most attractive to students who are 1) "bright but bored" 2) middle-class and of at least average achievement who seek to maximize their options and 3) those recalcitrants who are unable to adapt to the traditional school environment. Less than 10 percent of those under 18 who took the CHSPE were not attending school, clearly an under-represented population considering the nature of the program. Moreover, students from low-achieving schools are not taking the CHSPE--one commonly reported reason being the difficulty of the exam.

The financial impact of the CHSPE program has been examined primarily at the state level--in the 1975-76 school year, the net savings to the State General Fund, in apportionments that would otherwise have been made to local high schools, was nearly 5 million dollars. This approximate 5 million dollar savings to the General Fund was also matched by a very roughly equal amount of unlevied local property taxes. A detailed examination of the effects of the CHSPE program on the income and expenditures of local schools is beyond the scope of this study, but, nearly without exception, school and district administrators reported the drop in average daily attendance due to the program as negligible.

In summary, the CHSPE program has worked well for a few individuals, saved the state nearly 5 million dollars in the first year of its operation, and had a negligible impact on the schools. As long as the severe financial disincentive

to the schools persists, these program outcomes will likely remain unaltered. The single most effective intervention to increase program participation would be to increase publicity both within and outside the schools.

LEGISLATIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION HISTORY

The legislative history of the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) program cannot be clearly explained without a brief summary of California's unique law and practice concerning compulsory secondary education. California's compulsory attendance laws operate in two stages. The first stage basically requires all young persons to attend school from ages six to 16 (Education Code § 48200). The second stage requires young persons 16 and 17 who have not graduated from high school to attend special "continuation" education classes until they either graduate or turn 18 (Education Code § 48410). The basic continuation education statute is of many years standing and in form reflects its original intent. It provides a minimum attendance requirement of only four hours per week, but also specifies that young persons subject to it who are not regularly employed must attend for a minimum of 15 hours per week (Education Code §§ 48400, 48402) (recently changed from three hours per day--only one hour less than the minimum required of students younger than 16)--thus indirectly evidencing an assumption that a majority of the age group it covered would be employed. Its original purpose was to provide a continuing link with the schools--however tenuous--for the mass of young persons who would, its authors apparently believed, inevitably go to work at age 16.

The Education Code lists many possible alternatives to continuation classes, one of which is conventional high school (Education Code § 48410). As time went on after the original enactment of this section, it became the rule--statute notwithstanding--that the large majority of 16- and 17-year-olds attend conventional high school with continuation classes available as an alternative for only a very limited number of selected students.

This situation developed as a result of two aspects of continuation classes--their cost and their image. Continuation classes are offered in most districts (all districts must either have their own continuation education program or have a formal sharing agreement with another district that does) in a separate, and usually substandard, plant. Pupil-teacher ratios are quite low, however, as required to achieve continuation's mandated emphasis on individual instruction, accounting for the classes' considerably greater than average per-pupil cost. And though many continuation schools in just the last few years have blossomed into true alternative schools, with much emphasis on personal values within a small community of teachers and students and very contemporary curricula and instructional strategies, their image in the community and among students who do not attend them remains that of "low-security reform schools." This latter fact stems from the universal practice in recent years of district administrators referring to continuation--usually on an involuntary basis--only those students who

were chronically truant, constantly in trouble in school, or who had run afoul of the law outside school. Though now in many districts continuation schools occasionally attract very bright and successful students who have learned about and seek the relative personal freedom and sense of community of the continuation classes, the old image lingers on.

Thus, diametrically opposite to the apparent intent of the law, continuation education is the distinct exception for California's 16- and 17-year-olds, most of whom go right on in conventional high school as if the law considered them no different from their younger fellows. That is, the ones who attend school go right on; many others, somewhere around their sixteenth birthdays and the beginning of their junior year in high school, become very poor attenders, truant, or simply dropouts. These three categories are not discrete, but elusive semantic points along a continuum--and they present a problem which, though difficult to obtain reliable statistics about, most school personnel, parents, and legislators consider fairly serious.

Perhaps the most basic approach to the problem of poor or non-attendance is to eliminate the law which requires it, and this veteran Senator (now retired) Stephen Teale sought to do with a bill he introduced in early 1972. The bill did not survive its first committee hearing, but there was a significant amount of support for it. Then freshman Arlen Gregorio, who had had the help of many high school and community college age young people in his campaign, believed

there was a serious problem in the last two years of high school and saw the support for the Teale bill as perhaps being the nucleus of a larger group of legislators who would support some liberalization of required attendance for 16- and 17-year-olds short of eliminating it.

As a legislative expedient, Gregorio re-introduced Teale's bill in the form in which it had been defeated (SB 1112). He intended from the first to amend other provisions into it, dropping its original language entirely. The elements of Sacramento's "education lobby"--the California Teachers' Association, the California Federation of Teachers, the California School Boards Associaton, the Association of California School Administrators, and several of the largest school districts, such as Los Angeles Unified, San Diego Unified, and so on--were unaware of this intent, however, and advised Gregorio of their opposition with the same unanimity and clarity that they had mustered against Teale's measure. These groups all regarded Gregorio as a basically pro-education liberal, however; when he subsequently amended the bill to eliminate any question of its simply repealing compulsory attendance for 16- and 17-year-olds they were reassured and relieved. Their official positions became uniformly neutral, and the bill never gained as much of their attention again. It is thus possible that had Gregorio waited and introduced his bill in the form he all along intended, it would have ultimately had more opposition than it did, since it would not have benefited

from being a lesser evil as amended than in its original form. It is also and independently true that the education lobby's reaction to both bills evidences a perception on the part of its members of the general public displeasure with the last two years of high school as it existed and the consequent political vulnerability of compulsory attendance for 16- and 17-year-olds. The education lobby was prepared to fight strenuously to protect that requirement's very existence but was much less concerned about modifications of it--modificiations that might even actually take the heat off it.

Gregorio sought to exploit this possible opening from the first, stressing as he amended his bill that its new provisions were a conservative approach to what was obviously a serious problem. (He frequently restated this assessment throughout the bill's progress through the legislature.) The amended bill, as Gregorio explained it, contained four provisions. First, it added new language concerning continuation schools, in effect creating the clear right for students themselves to request placement in continuation and requiring such requests to be honored--unless the district could not afford to do so. Gregorio chose this course in preference to requiring such requests to be honored in all cases, since doing so would have required a companion appropriation provision to cover the increased costs of larger continuation enrollments. He was confident that then-Governor Reagan would have vetoed any such appropriation

and the rest of the bill it was in. In sum, then, this provision would accomplish little in most districts, since those districts were already spending as much on continuation as they deemed necessary--or possible. In any case, the education lobby perceived it as innocuous.

The second provision in the bill directed the Department of Education to devise "a means to determine proficiency" in high school level skills and provided that any student subject to compulsory continuation education--that is, any 16- or 17-year-old--could request to have such proficiency on his part confirmed. Such a student would be awarded a Certificate of Proficiency which would explicitly not be equivalent to a high school diploma. In form, this provision would be a new section of the Education Code, cross-referenced by a new addition to the existing list of alternatives to compulsory continuation attendance (the list which included attendance at conventional high school), providing that a student who had thus demonstrated proficiency could simply be excused from compulsory continuation attendance altogether, if he presented verified parental permission.

The bill's third provision permitted such exempted students to enroll in local community colleges in limited numbers (not to exceed one percent of the total enrollment of any given campus and then only with the individual permission for each student of the campus's president). The limitation was demanded by the Deputy Director of the Department

of Finance, who saw a distinct annual savings to the state for each student who left school early--but who saw also that in the first year the actual result could be an overall increase if all such students immediately enrolled in community colleges, since per-student state aid to community colleges is higher than the corresponding aid to high schools. Of course the result over years would inevitably be a saving, since such students would have reduced their time in all public schools by an average of at least one year, but the concrete political reality of annual budgets tends to make Directors of Finance, and their deputies, worry about one year at a time, starting with the next one--and this Deputy Director was no exception.

The fourth and last provision of the bill, fully as revolutionary as the third, in principle, but more obscure, dealt with Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (the difference between a "Center" and a "Program" lies in whether or not there is a central facility). ROC/P's provide specifically vocational training to persons 16 and older. Originally intended to operate in conjunction with regular or continuation schools for their minor students and alone or in conjunction with adult high schools for adults, they award specific certificates of achievement in such areas as auto body repair, upholstery, food services, and so on. Gregorio's bill provided that in addition to operating in conjunction with compulsory continuation attendance, ROC/P's could also simply serve as a complete alternative to it--this provision being just

another addition to the statutory list of approved alternatives to compulsory continuation attendance. Its result would be that if a student 16 years of age showed "satisfactory attendance" (a then and still undefined term applying to institutions with only the loosest attendance accounting mechanisms and no practical administrative means of nor inclination toward compelling attendance) upon as little as, say, three hours per week of auto mechanics, the student would have no other attendance requirement. Such a student would naturally forfeit the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, but if he or she wanted to get out of academic classes legally, this would be a means. All but totally ignored at the time, this provision is still little known.

Out of this potpourri of provisions, inserted piecemeal into one of the most complex areas of the Education Code, would grow the CHSPE program--unforeseen in its present form by anyone then involved. The bill did not even contain an appropriation, giving the Department of Education time--until the fall of 1975 to develop the "means to determine proficiency"--instead of money.

Considering the form of the amended bill, which included terms key to the operation of its provisions that were both unprecedented in the code and undefined in the bill, the specific bases of the small amount of opposition that subsequently emerged seem surprising. The first formal opposition came from the NAACP, stimulated by the personal

opposition of the NAACP's Sacramento legislative representative, Virna Canson. Canson clearly communicated to Senator Gregorio her belief that the state had an affirmative obligation to ensure that minority children, among others, attended school regularly and gained a solid traditonal education which would prepare them for entrance to professional and other advanced training. She believed that given the opportunity to leave school without a regular diploma, too many minority children would take it. It is a fair summary of her position that minority children should be forced to gain a traditional education for their own good (and for the good of all racial minority members), despite their own antipathy and their parents' indifference. Canson testified against the bill in the first committee to hear it and at her recommendation the NAACP's Western Regional Director wrote a letter of opposition to Senator Gregorio and the other committee members. The bill was subsequently given a "do pass" recommendation by the committee, and though Canson's personal and the NAACP's official position on the bill never changed, she and the organization took no further action regarding it. The bill was not a major issue to the NAACP, and failing to persuade Senator Gregorio, whom she regarded as generally a good vote for the NAACP, of the merits of her position, Canson eventually dropped the matter.

The only other opposition to the measure came from California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), a federally funded "poverty

law" agency engaged primarily in providing legal assistance to farm laborers and other poor rural minorities but which also mounted a significant lobbying effort in Sacramento. CRLA's lobbying effort was surprisingly effective, despite its low budget and small staff, because of the considerable personal effectiveness among progressive legislators of its bright and dedicated young attorney-representatives. CRLA's opposition to Gregorio's bill was related to Canson's but was somewhat more pragmatic: Its young lawyers were more concerned about the value of a diploma itself than the education which it theoretically stood for. They thought that many young latinos, for example, might well be better off outside Anglo-dominated public schools; but they feared that the Certificate of Proficiency would be a "second class piece of paper," in that the bill expressly stated it would not be equivalent to a high school diploma. Also perceiving Gregorio as generally a friend of the group they served, the CRLA representatives approached Gregorio, told him of the basis of their opposition to the bill as it stood, and requested him to amend it to make the Certificate of Proficiency equivalent to a high school diploma. Gregorio expressed to them his grave concern that such an amendment would likely make the bill, which the CRLA otherwise supported, impossible to enact. The CRLA representatives ultimately agreed to drop their opposition to the bill in return for Gregorio's promise to carry follow-up legislation (which they promised to work to help pass)converting

the Certificate of Proficiency's status to that of a high school diploma.

Gregorio did, however, immediately amend the bill in response to a separate concern of the CRLA, one that had also been expressed by Canson. This concern was that some school administrators would take advantage of the proficiency exemption from compulsory attendance as a means to "push out" unwanted, because disruptive, minority students. Gregorio's amendments completely mollified CRLA's representatives on this account, providing that a student who had once left school under the proficiency exemption had the express right to re-enroll in the same school at any time before he turned 18 (after which he could always enroll in the adult high school program offered in all districts or even in most community colleges, which may by law and usually do accept all residents who are 18 or older).

The bill's only close call came on the Senate floor. Gregorio, in his presentation of the measure, expressed his belief that the eleventh hour for compulsory school attendance beyond the age of 16 was rapidly approaching unless ameliorative action were taken, that absenteeism and truancy rates, though difficult to verify, were unacceptably high. He also expressed his belief, however, as he did in each of the four committees which ultimately heard the bill, that the substantial majority of students were still content with the conventional high schools they attended and that relatively few young persons would ultimately take advantage

of the bill's provision allowing them to leave school altogether. He opined that those who would leave school would fall into two groups, the "border-line dropouts," who just wanted to get out of school, and the "bright but bored," who had got all they believed there was for them to get from high school and who wanted to go on to college without waiting until their regular graduation.

(Although he did not repeat them in his Senate floor presentation, Gregorio had also used two other arguments to persuade certain senators to vote for the bill. To some conservatives he had expressed the thought that availability of the proficiency exemption from compulsory attendance could be used by shrewd teachers and administrators to put intelligent but irresponsible students who complained about and disrupted their classes in a "put up or shut up" situation, perhaps causing some of them for the first time to consider seriously the real value to them of a high school education. To some liberal/progressives Gregorio had propounded the possibility that the proficiency exemption would give clever young persons some leverage against hidebound or inertia-ridden administrators who might be reluctantly willing to modify rigid required course patterns in order to induce such students to remain in school and thus continue to receive the state aid for them).

California's Senate has, in the decade-plus since implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court's Baker v. Carr decision, generally split on most issues along philosophical or ideological, not partisan, lines (as contrasted with the Assembly,

which, with a fundamentally different organizational structure, tends to be substantially more partisan). The basic division in the Senate is between the conservatives and the liberal/progressives. Gregorio's bill was fairly difficult to classify among ideological lines, so that, as with other similarly elusive measures, each of the two continuing groups in the Senate broke into pro and con subgroups. The conservative "aye" votes for the bill were based on the premise expressed in the rhetorical question Why should the taxpayers waste money forcing ungrateful young persons to attend school who just disrupted class when there and interfered with the learning of the other students who were trying to get an education? This had been Senator Teale's premise. The conservative "no" votes stemmed from an expressed belief that permissiveness was what was ruining the schools and this bill was just another step along that path; children belong in schools and should be made to attend for their own good. The liberal/progressive "aye" votes were generally based on the libertarian conviction of those who cast them that government should only rarely, if ever, make anyone do anything 'for his own good.' The liberal/progressive "no" votes stemmed from the more nearly traditional liberal position that education should be a general social benefit and that if it had grown not to be, the answer was to improve the schools, not to release their students and thereby relieve the pressure for improving them. The bill was the object of a more thoughtful

examination in this instance than it or any of the subsequent CHSPE legislation ever was again in any legislative forum; when the vote was counted it was passed by the bare minimum necessary, one more than half the membership of the house (had it contained an appropriation, it would have required a two-thirds affirmative vote). The bill's further course through the Assembly was uneventful, with large majorities of "aye" votes following each of its hearings. Governor Reagan signed it without comment. Promptly at the beginning of the next legislative session in early 1973, Gregorio introduced a bill to alter the statutory status of the Certificate of Proficiency (SB 52). Because he believed the education lobby would oppose not so much the certificate's having parity with a diploma but rather its being a short-cut to that attainment, the bill provided that the certificate would become equivalent to a diploma when its holder turned 18. This seemingly roundabout approach stemmed in part from Gregorio's casual knowledge of the arguments surrounding a related, ultimately successful measure, to accord recognition in California law of the General Educational Development (GED) exam (California was then one of only seven states which did not by law provide some sort of diploma-holder status to those who passed the GED). This latter bill was firmly contested by representatives of adult education programs, which routinely give part credit for passing the GED toward their own regular diplomas. This bill ultimately provided

that those who earned a certain minimum passing score on the GED would, if they submitted evidence of that fact along with a small fee to the Department of Education, be awarded a Certificate of High School Equivalency, legally equivalent to a high school diploma "for purpose of public employment." Gregorio was not concerned with this latter limitation, but he did note with interest another provision of the bill, namely that it did not permit anyone to take the GED exam until he had turned 18 or until the class of which he would normally have been a member had graduated from high school. What Gregorio did not know was that this provision was merely an including in state law of a pre-existing federal GED regulation, not a concession to the bill's opponents, as he assumed. Gregorio, then, was putting an intentionally parallel delayed-action provision into his bill and hoping it would meet the same apparent acceptance. CRLA was not entirely pleased with this provision, wanting the Certificate of Proficiency to have immediate and unqualified parity with a high school diploma (except for acting as an exemption from compulsory attendance unless its minor holder also had parental permission; CRLA's representatives agreed with Gregorio that almost any enterprising teenager who wanted to leave school badly and could satisfactorily demonstrate proficiency would have no trouble convincing his parents into signing the paper and that it was better to protect the school from possible later parental displeasure by having the parents take

responsibility in writing for the student's leaving). CRLA was willing, however, to accept Gregorio's judgment that the provision was probably essential to the bill's passage. Arguing that in this form the bill would not lure students to act on the proficiency exemption alternative merely to get a diploma ahead of time but would still let those leave early who wished to (and were "proficient") with no ultimately discriminatory effect, Gregorio had no difficulty obtaining easy passage for it in the Senate.

When the bill came before the Assembly Education Committee, however, its chairman, Leroy Greene, asked bluntly, If the Certificate of Proficiency was a diploma when its holder turned 18, why wasn't it one when he first got it? Because Greene obviously was joined in this sentiment by a majority of his fellow committee members, the bill was amended on the spot to eliminate the delayed-action mechanism. Passed in this form by the Assembly and routinely concurred in, to Gregorio's relief, by the Senate (then signed by Governor Reagan), the bill had the net actual effect of removing one word from the Education Code: Where the law had previously read "The certificate shall not be deemed equivalent to a high school diploma," it now read, "The certificate shall be deemed equivalent to a high school diploma" (Education Code § 48414).

One result of this change was to make the limitation on community college enrollment of certificate holders a legal anomoly. California's laws had long provided that any

public community college must admit any resident who was a high school graduate. Legislative Counsel, the legislature's legal advisory staff, opined that Gregorio's newly enacted bill converted proficiency certificate holders to the status of "high school graduates" for statutory classification purposes, but nevertheless held that the community college enrollment limitations on certificate holders, set forth independently in the code by Gregorio's first bill, were still valid as an exercise of non-invidious legislative discrimination concerning an identifiable subclass of "high school graduates." Gregorio, an attorney himself, had doubts concerning the legal soundness of that opinion but resolved to eliminate the problem directly. With a newly elected Governor, Jerry Brown (and a new Director of Finance) in office in 1974, Gregorio introduced a bill (SB 470) to eliminate the enrollment limitations altogether. He presented the measure as being technical and "clean-up" in nature, stating that he believed the bill only conformed statutory language to what he personally believed was already legal reality and what, in any case, he had intended in part to accomplish with his bill of the previous year. The bill was given only low-level staff scrutiny by the Department of Finance, whose representatives Gregorio convinced of the overall long-run savings effect of the proficiency exemption mechanism. The bill passed easily and was signed by Governor Brown.

When Gregorio and staff members of the Department of

Education first discussed the mechanics of implementing his proficiency legislation, in 1972, Gregorio explained he had in mind the Department's assembling a measurement instrument or package of instruments of which it would supply only a few master copies to each school district. Districts would then reproduce the instruments in the quantities they needed to meet student requests. He intended that the examination be more-or-less continuously available "on demand," much as the GED is in most districts. Following legal conversion of the Certificate of Proficiency into the equivalent of a high school diploma, thus making it much more attractive, Department staff working on the program realized that the exam, to retain its credibility as an honest and reliable measure, would have to be "secure"--which meant administered under controlled conditions, which meant considerably greater cost than just sending out master copies of a standardized test. Approached about these concerns, Gregorio concurred and agreed to carry yet another bill in the 1975 legislative session to provide the necessary funds. Following negotiations with the Department of Finance, it was agreed that the bill (SB 1243) would authorize a loan to the Department of Education in an amount estimated to be adequate for one year of operation, to be repaid over a maximum of two years with the proceeds from a $10 application fee also authorized by the bill. It was expected that the program would thereafter be self-funding on a break-even basis. This bill was routinely enacted.

In 1976, after one year of operation of the CHSPE program, Gregorio carried yet another bill (SB 1502) to fine tune the CHSPE program in light of operational experience. In its first major provision, the bill altered eligibility from the original 16 or 17 years to anyone 16 or older (thus opening the program to adults), or who had completed one year of enrollment in the tenth grade, or who was enrolled in the second semester of the tenth grade. This change allowed second-semester sophomores who had not yet turned 16 to take the exam and thereby have the opportunity to skip all of their last two years in high school. Sophomores who turned 16 before the last exam of the year already had this opportunity.

This provision in turn stemmed from an operational decision the Department of Education had made earlier on to administer the CHSPE not more than three times per year, since a more frequent schedule was all but administratively impossible on a secure basis. In the second major provision, Gregorio's bill enacted this operational decision into statute, mandating that the exam be given once each semester, timed such that results would be returned not later than two weeks before the end of each semester so as to facilitate student transition between high schools and community colleges (which generally have parallel academic calendars). The bill also authorized a third, "summer" administration of the exam at the Department's option.

The third significant element of the bill modified slightly

a certificate holder's re-enrollment right, providing that once having left school he could re-enroll in the school district where he lived at any time but that if he then left once again, then again sought re-enrollment, the district could, if it chose, force him to wait until the beginning of the following semester. This provision was included at the behest of local school administrators who saw a potential (no one could cite an actual example) problem with "revolving door" certificate holders. This bill was also enacted easily.

The CHSPE program more than paid its cost out of fee income in its first year of operation. As a result of changes in the exam which necessitated a more expensive scoring procedure, combined with smaller numbers of examinees than expected, however, the program began to operate at a loss in its second year. Following further negotiations with the Department of Finance, Gregorio succeeded in placing a thereafter-annual appropriation in the state budget to cover the program's operating deficit. In the negotiations, Gregorio reminded the Department of Finance that in the CHSPE program's first year, the state had been having its cake and eating it too--that is, the CHSPE program both cost nothing and produced a savings. He pointed out that it would reduce that savings by only a small amount to use some of it to cover the program's deficit. The Department of Finance concurred and supported the appropriation.

In his last legislative action to date concerning the CHSPE

program, Gregorio succeeded in placing an appropriation in the 1977-78 budget adequate to allow the Department of Education to distribute to each eleventh or twelfth grader in California's public schools a one-page information sheet on the CHSPE program. He did so as a result of his belief that at least some districts were intentionally withholding information about the CHSPE from their students.

In general, reaction from schools and districts to the legislation was apparently minimal, until the CHSPE Program was implemented. At the time of initial implementation several large districts surfaced their opposition to the legislation, but no legislative changes ensued.

Design of the CHSPE

The skills measured on the CHSPE are those basic skills taught in California public schools. These skills are measured by pencil and paper applied performance items set in the context of adult day-to-day living experiences and as such are not intended to be predictive of academic performance. It is not the purpose of the CHSPE to yield a profile of strengths and weaknesses for each person who takes the test, and the actual test instrument is not designed to do so. No individual profiles, numerical scores, or other comparative test results can be provided; results are reported as "pass" or "not pass" only.

In the development of the CHSPE, several sources (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progresss, Adult Performance Level Study, Right to Read, Human Resources Research

Organization, Wisconsin Test of Adult Basic Education, New York State Basic Competency Tasks, local district developed tests, California Assessment Program and commercial standardized tests and item pools) were examined for the content they measured, their rationale, and item formats they employed.

Initially a 5 x 8 process-by-content matrix--with reading, writing, computing, problem solving, and knowledge recall as process, and language arts, mathematics, career/occupational development, consumer skills, health maintenance, community resources, and social and natural sciences as contents--was used to guide item development and to expedite the categorization of items for retrieval. Out of the initial experience with item development and item retrieval for test preparation, a more workable 2 x 4 process-by-content matrix, shown in Figure 1, is now used for item development and test preparation. The two process skills of communication (including arithmetic reasoning, computation, and graph and scale interpretation) are measured across the four content areas of context-free (item settings having no particular reference to any given context), career/occupational development, consumer skills (including health maintenance and community resources), and natural and social sciences. Shown in Table 1 are some of the typical item settings currently used to develop and retrieve items referenced to the eight cells depicted in Figure 1. In May, 1975, a selected sample of twelfth grade pupils from public schools in California was included in a field

	CONTEXT-FREE	CAREER AND OCCUPATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	CONSUMER SKILLS (including HEALTH MAINTENANCE, COMMUNITY RESOURCES)	NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
COMMUNICATION SKILLS Reading Writing Language	(Communication Skills)	Career and Occupational Development ——— Communication Skills	Consumer Skills ——— Communication Skills	Social Science Natural Science ——— Communication Skills
PROBLEM SOLVING Arithmetic Reasoning Computation Graph and Scale Interpretation	(Problem Solving)	Career and Occupational Development ——— Problem Solving	Consumer Skills ——— Problem Solving	Social Science Natural Science ——— Problem Solving

Figure 1

Process by Content Matrix for the California High School Proficiency Exam

TABLE 1

PARTIAL SURVEY OF ITEM SETTINGS OCCURRING IN THE CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY EXAM

Basic Skills (Context-Free)

Communication Skills

1) Comprehending sentences, paragraphs, articles
2) Alphabetizing
3) Using indexes, dictionaries
4) Writing sentences, paragraphs
5) Punctuating sentences
6) Writing and analyzing social correspondence
7) Identifying best sentence order within paragraphs
8) Interpreting addresses on envelopes and identifying parts
9) Identifying the main thoughts in paragraphs
10) Distinguishing between facts and opinions

Problem Solving

1) Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing: whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, and measures of weight, speed, volume, time, length, money, temperature
2) Converting numbers (decimals to fractions)
3) Converting units of measure (both within and between English and Metric systems)
4) Computing areas, perimeters, and volumes of geometric figures
5) Identifying all or parts of geometric figures
6) Applying mathematical concepts to solve reading problems
7) Applying rules of rounding off
8) Using charts, graphs in computation
9) Interpreting word numbers
10) Identifying ordinal positions
11) Interpreting measurements scales
12) Converting numbers to words, words to numbers

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Career and Occupational Development

Communication Skills

1) Interpreting employment posters, advertisements, specifications, forms, procedures
2) Interpreting personnel ratings
3) Interpreting occupational development materials
4) Recognizing basic components of business letters

Problem Solving

1) Computing personal income
2) Planning career development
3) Applying basic mathematical skills to career and occupational development contexts
4) Interpreting charts and graphs depicting career and occupational development data

Consumer Skills (Including Health Maintenance and Community Resources)

Communication Skills

1) Interpreting advertisements, product labels, guarantees, business practices
2) Interpreting bills, invoices, insurance ratings
3) Interpreting consumer articles, graphs, charts
4) Interpreting recipes, work orders, assembly instructions
5) Understanding, completing common forms (tax, insurance, checks, credit)
6) Composing consumer request letters
7) Comprehending health maintenance articles
8) Interpreting drug prescription labels, warnings, nutrition charts
9) Understanding first aid procedures
10) Interpreting road signs
11) Reading road maps
12) Interpreting community resource directories, guides, listings
13) Interpreting membership requirements
14) Diagraming traffic accidents
15) Interpreting traffic tickets and rules of safety
16) Interpreting information about permit requirements
17) Interpreting directions to get from one location to another

Problem Solving

1) Using consumer banking skills
2) Comparing product costs, weights
3) Computing taxes
4) Computing from advertisements
5) Computing data found on product labels
6) Computing distance, elevation from maps
7) Comprehending credit and lending practices
8) Applying common terms used in health, safety and nutrition
9) Reading transportation schedules
10) Interpreting paycheck withholding statements
11) Interpreting charts and graphs depicting consumer skills data
12) Applying basic mathematical skills in consumer contexts

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Sciences (Social and Natural)

Communication Skills

1) Comprehending social science literature
2) Comprehending natural science literature
3) Interpreting voting ballots, materials
4) Interpreting maps (political boundaries, time zones, weather, etc.)
5) Interpreting common legal forms, rules, ordinances

Problem Solving

1) Comprehending basic governmental organizations, operations
2) Comprehending basic scientific approaches to problem solving
3) Interpreting charts or graphs depicting social science data
4) Interpreting charts or graphs depicting natural science cata
5) Applying basic mathematical skills in social science contexts
6) Applying basic mathematical skills in natural science contexts

testing of items considered for use in the first administration of the CHSPE. To examine the representativeness of the sample, the Iowa Test of Educational Development results from the sample schools for the 1973-74 California State Testing Program were retrieved and summarized. A close fit was found between the sample and state means, and sample and state variances, confirming the "representativeness" of the sample.

Department of Education personnel and local school district representatives screened the field-tested items for cultural bias and other abnormalities. In addition, each item was rated for content acceptability. Item characteristics were also computed and used to screen and edit items for inclusion in the first examination. To complete the process, all selected items were given a final edit before submitting them for additional screening and publication by the contracted testing firm, Educational Testing Service (ETS). Examples of items contained on the CHSPE can be found in the California High School Proficiency Examination Information Bulletin reproduced in Appendix I.

To pass the CHSPE, a person must demonstrate proficiency in both the objective and an essay portion of the examination, individually. Item characteristics gained from the field testing were used to help determine a passing score for the objective portion, namely the performance equivalent to that of an average second semester senior in a California public comprehensive high school (continuation high schools were not included). The level of the passing

score is revalidated on each succeeding administration of the CHSPE through inclusion of items from the California State Assessment Program[1] which have known values for California twelfth graders. The result from each examination administration is also equated back to the first administration of the CHSPE. This procedure enables the establishment of a pool of items calibrated to a normalized and standardized level of difficulty. It also allows future examinations to be developed from experimental items that have been equated to the item pool and insures a minimum passing test performance equivalent to that of previous CHSPE administrations. The essay portion of the CHSPE is patterned after the statewide writing assessment[2] and scored using a holistic rating procedure (see Appendix II for a detailed explanation of the scoring procedures).

Psychometric properties. The objective section of the CHSPE has averaged an estimated test reliability of .95 as computed by the Kuder-Richardson formula (20). The standard error of measurement averaged 4.8 raw score points

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1. The State of California annually conducts a statewide educational assessment program (CAP) in grades two, three, six and twelve. Reading achievement is measured in grades two and three, while for the upper grades four areas are tested: reading, spelling, effectiveness of written expression, and mathematics. The tests are constructed by the State Department of Education to specifications taken from objectives commonly used in California school districts.

2. An Assessment of the Writing Performance of California High School Senior. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1977.

where the maximum score averaged 140. The Spearman-Brown reliability estimate for the essay scores (computed only for the November, 1976, administration) is .60. Summarized in Table 2 are the numbers tested and pass rates for all five test administrations.

Other Legislation on Proficiency

One innovative aspect of the CHSPE program concerns the certification of certain competencies prior to the awarding of the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency. The CHSPE surrogate diploma may be viewed as more "valid" than a regular high school diploma in that a CHSPE certificate is awarded only following a demonstration of competency in a well-defined set of skills, eliminating any association with the notion of awarding a diploma on the basis of "seat time." In an era in which the perceived value of a diploma is eroding, a "certified" diploma (or equivalent) should be of greater value assuming the underlying set of skills is valued. While many school administrators would admit that the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency has the advantage of manifest certification of skill attainment, they are quick to point out that their own local diplomas will soon be awarded only to those individuals who demonstrate minimum competency in reading, writing, and computing.

This new basic skills minimum competency requirement stems from passage of AB 3408 in 1976, authored by Assemblyman Gary Hart, which became effective January 1, 1977. Previ-

TABLE 2

Group Statistics for CHSPE Administrations
from December, 1975 through June, 1977

Administration	Number of Persons	Percentage Passed
December, 1975	12,149	45%
March, 1976	18,463	32%
November, 1976	10,498	46%
March, 1977	9,911	52%
June, 1977	9,680	45%

ous law required only locally developed minimum graduation requirements, including a course of study and general standards of proficiency. AB 3408 established the following additional requirements:

- Each governing board of a high school or unified district maintaining (a) junior and/or senior high school(s) must adopt its own standards of proficiency by June, 1978, in basic skills, including, but not limited to, reading comprehension, writing, and computation.
- Student progress shall be assessed at least once in grades seven through nine and twice in grades 10 through 11 to determine whether students have met or are meeting the required standards. Once a student has met the standards, his or her progress need not be reassessed.
- District or school staff shall hold a conference with each student who does not meet the standards, together with the student's parent or guardian, to discuss the assessment results and proposed instructional programs to assist the student in meeting the standards.
- Districts shall provide appropriate instruction in basic skills for those students who do not meet the standards.
- After June, 1980, no student who has not met the locally adopted standards of proficiency shall receive a high school graduation diploma.

- Governing boards, with the active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and students shall adopt alternate means for pupils to complete the course of study prescribed in existing law. This requirement is not directly related to the new requirements for proficiency standards in the three basic skill areas but is nonetheless an important requirement that districts must address.

Subsequent to 1980, there will be three "certified diplomas" awarded in California: a locally awarded regular diploma with certification of at least minimum proficiency attainment under the requirements of AB 3408, the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency certifying performance at or above the statewide twelfth grade mean in a specified set of skills, and the state-issued GED High School Equivalency Certificate which is linked to the guidelines established by the American Council on Education and State Department of Education normative standards. Traditionally, the locally awarded diploma has enjoyed the status of the premier certificate, and the introduction of AB 3408 should strenghten, or at least inhibit somewhat the erosion of, the local diploma's value. The relationship among these three "diplomas" is discussed further in Section 4 of this report.

AB 65, the comprehensive school finance measure, was signed by the governor on September 17, 1977. This measure encompasses some "reform" by providing for "a framework for

school improvement and funds to support improvement efforts at school sites around the State with the involvement of school district and site administrators, teachers, parents, and students." This measure, in combination with AB 3408 and the CHSPE, is likely to generate a number of changes and student alternatives from within the schools.

EXAMINEE CHARACTERISTICS

The only longitudinal (in the replicative sense) source of statewide information about examinees is collected through a questionnaire voluntarily filled out by examinees prior to taking the CHSPE. The pre-test questionnaire is necessarily brief and suffers from a non-response rate of 10 to 20 percent, depending on the particular question. The data do, however, yield at least a crude picture of the characteristics of the various CHSPE cohorts, including information on planned future action. Copies of these questionnaires and the summary results may be found in Appendix III.

The focus of this component of the study was to find out what did happen to a sample of the December, 1975, cohort and what effect the exam has had in terms of the various options the examinees exercised. The selected examinees were contacted nearly 15 months after taking the CHSPE and were questioned on demographic variables, affective variables, variables dealing with external influences on their lives, and variables relating to the decision making process. The analysis of both the longitudinal pre-test questionnaires and the in-depth follow-up study yields information as to the generalizability of the sample findings. Further, passers and non-passers were compared and contrasted on a number of significant variables.

Longitudinal (Replicative) Analysis

There are a number of reasons for suspecting the December, 1975, cohort of examinees differed from subsequent examinee cohorts. The most prominent among these reasons is that the "novelty" of the first administration attracted many students who would otherwise not demonstrate more than a modicum of interest in the CHSPE. It is true the December group performed better on the exam than the March, 1976, group did.[1] Presumably, this fact is the result of some numbers of bright, tuned-in, achievement-oriented students finding out about the CHSPE and electing to take it to test their skills. Students with these characteristics probably would not elect to leave school in their senior year, since that environment provides them the opportunity to continually demonstrate their success.

The occurrence of this novelty effect in large numbers of the December, 1975, cohort would clearly reduce the validity of any generalizations based on that group. Fortunately, there are a number of interesting pre-test questionnaire items, common to the first four administrations, which yield indications of the pattern over time. Shown in Table 3 are the results over four administrations on selected common

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1. The mean score on the 98 common items between the December and March exam was 67.9 for the December cohort compared with 64.8 for the March group. The mean score on 82 common items between the March cohort and the following November (1977) cohort was 48.6 for the March group and 48.5 for the November group, an insignificant difference.

LONGITUDINAL SUMMARY OF SELECTED QUESTIONS FROM PRE-CHSPE QUESTIONNAIRES

(1) What grade are you in now?

DATE	% RES	% 9	% P	% F	% 10	% P	% F	% 11	% P	% F	% 12	% P	% F	% O	% P	% F
12/75	84.4	1.0	16.7	83.3	4.3	28.3	71.7	51.0	45.8	54.1	38.2	47.1	52.9	6.3	48.9	51.1
3/76	81.3	0.4	13.6	86.4	14.0	29.7	70.3	59.9	34.7	65.3	17.5	32.4	67.5	8.3	32.7	67.3
11/76	87.6	0.1	20.0	80.0	3.6	24.4	75.6	51.9	40.7	59.3	37.5	37.2	62.8	6.8	42.4	57.6
3/77	84.9	0.6	44.4	55.6	19.0	54.8	45.2	56.9	55.1	44.9	15.2	49.8	50.2	8.3	53.7	46.2

(2) What grade do you generally get in English?

DATE	% RES	% A/B	% P	% F	% B/C	% P	% F	% C	% P	% F	% C/D	% P	% F	% D/F	% P	% F
12/75	84.9	30.0	64.0	36.0	32.0	43.1	56.9	22.0	34.3	65.6	13.2	30.7	69.3	2.8	37.2	62.8
3/76	80.8	25.9	53.1	46.9	31.3	31.5	68.5	24.5	23.0	77.0	15.1	20.6	79.4	3.2	23.8	76.2
11/76	86.4	30.7	60.6	39.4	33.5	37.0	63.0	21.6	24.3	75.7	11.6	18.9	81.1	2.7	22.2	77.8
3/77	83.8	31.4	70.1	29.9	33.2	49.8	50.2	20.4	43.4	56.6	12.0	42.1	57.7	2.9	42.9	57.1

(3) Do you plan to attend a university or four-year college at some future time?

DATE	% RES	% YES	% NO	% PASS	% YES	% NO	% FAIL	% YES	% NO
12/75	84.3	51.1	48.9	45.5	58.6	41.4	54.4	44.9	55.1
3/76	81.2	46.3	53.7	33.1	56.9	43.1	66.9	41.1	58.9
11/76	85.9	47.5	52.5	38.9	57.5	42.5	61.1	41.1	58.9
3/77	83.3	50.4	49.6	53.8	56.0	44.0	46.1	43.8	56.2

(4) Do you plan to enroll in community college soon after leaving high school?

DATE	% RES	% YES	% NO	% PASS	% YES	% NO	% FAIL	% YES	% NO
12/75	85.3	58.5	41.5	45.5	63.1	36.9	54.5	54.7	45.3
3/76	81.6	59.9	40.1	33.1	67.6	32.4	66.9	56.1	43.7
11/76	87.2	60.1	39.9	38.8	65.4	34.6	61.2	56.7	43.3
3/77	84.3	62.4	37.6	53.7	65.9	34.1	46.3	58.4	41.6

(5) Do you plan to work full time soon after leaving high school?

DATE	% RES	% YES	% NO	% PASS	% YES	% NO	% FAIL	% YES	% NO
12/75	85.1	59.2	40.8	45.5	54.3	45.7	54.5	63.3	36.7
3/76	81.7	61.8	38.2	33.2	51.5	48.5	66.8	67.6	32.8
11/76	87.2	62.1	37.9	38.8	53.9	46.1	61.2	67.3	32.7
3/77	84.2	59.8	40.2	53.7	54.0	46.0	46.2	66.5	33.5

(6) What is the level of education achieved by the head of the household in which you now live?

DATE	% RES	% LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	% P	% F	% HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	% P	% F	% COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREE	% P	% F	% FOUR YEAR DEGREE	% P	% F	% AD-VANCED DEGREE	% P	% F
12/75	80.8	14.7	38.3	61.6	34.8	40.5	59.5	18.9	48.5	51.5	15.8	51.3	48.7	15.8	59.8	40.2
3/76	75.5	16.4	25.8	74.1	36.1	28.7	71.3	18.0	36.0	64.0	15.5	40.5	59.5	14.1	49.5	50.5
11/76	87.7	15.9	28.9	71.1	35.5	34.0	66.0	18.7	38.5	61.5	16.4	45.5	54.5	13.4	53.8	46.2
3/77	85.2	14.7	43.7	56.3	36.4	48.3	51.7	19.0	54.3	45.5	16.1	62.5	37.4	13.9	67.1	32.9

questions. (Overall results of the first five administrations appear in Appendix III). The non-response rates are not insignificant, but several points emerge:

- A greater number of twelfth-graders take the CHSPE in the fall. There is relatively little pay-off for a student to take the CHSPE in the spring of his senior year, unless it is clear that he/she will not graduate. On the other hand, eleventh-graders will realize a year gain by taking the CHSPE in the spring.
- Eleventh-graders have a higher pass rate than students in any other grade level. Again, the time-gained incentive is so much stronger for this group that a number of achievement-oriented students would see the value of entering college a year earlier.
- There is no evidence that the December, 1975, cohort received higher grades in English and math. The March, 1976, cohort appears somewhat lower in percent A's and B's, while the other three cohorts are nearly equal.
- The percentage of those planning to attend a university or four-year college at some future time is slightly higher for the December, 1975, cohort.
- The percentage of those planning to enroll in community college soon after leaving high school is slightly lower for the December, 1975, cohort.

- The percentage of those who plan to work full time soon after leaving high school is slightly lower for the December, 1975, cohort.
- The December, 1975, cohort has a slightly higher percentage of the head of household holding an advanced degree and a slightly lower percentage reporting the head of household with less than a high school diploma.

With respect to A/B grades and level of education achieved by the head of the household, the March, 1976, cohort deviates from the other three cohorts. This variance is difficult to explain since the same pattern is not evident for the March, 1977, cohort. Given the source of the data (i.e., self-report) and the high non-response rate, these small fluctuations (less than five percent in most cases) are to be expected even when the cohorts are true replicates.

The most likely explanation why the December, 1975, cohort scored slightly higher than the other cohorts on the CHSPE is that a brighter group of twelfth-graders took the exam. The December cohort does not differ greatly from the other cohorts on any of the other characteristics reported in Table 3.

The question of generalizability is one of degree. It may well be that cohort consistency has not reached a steady state level and that all the cohorts differ from each other in some systematic (albeit not reliably detectable from

these data) fashion. In the one extreme, the follow-up of the December cohort may be viewed as a case study of a unique group of individuals responding to the novelty of an innovative program. The other view is that the cohorts are replicates, representatives from a population with the same characteristics with no selection biases. As with most questions of external validity, the truth appears to be somewhere in between.

December, 1975, Cohort Sample

A 10 percent stratified sample was randomly selected from the group of approximately 12,000 examinees who took the CHSPE in December, 1975. The pass rate on the December CHSPE was 45 percent (n=5,400); accordingly, 540 passers (10 percent of the passers) and 660 non-passers were selected to receive the questionnaire. The questionnaire was field tested in January and February and mailed to the examinee sample on February 24. Included in the mail-out was the rather lengthy questionnaire and an inspirational letter, designed to elicit a maximal response rate. On March 3 a follow-up post card was sent to all who had not responded. Copies of the letter, questionnaire, and post card appear in Appendix IV.

Shown in Figure 2 is a graph of the daily return rate over the three-month period from March through May, 1977. Not shown in this figure are the 40 additional completed questionnaires resulting from the telephone survey. The overall return rate was 45 percent, with 61 percent of the

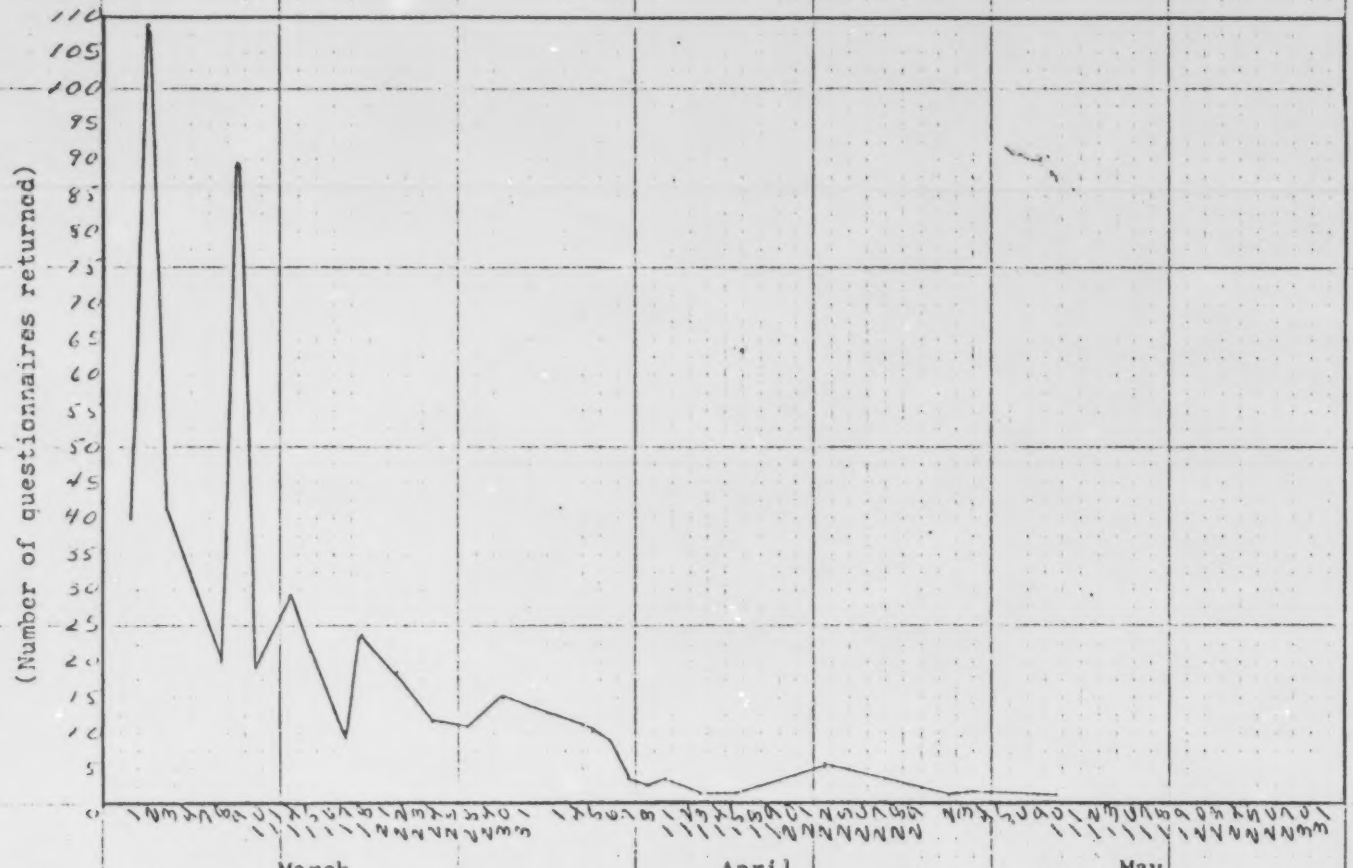

FIGURE 2

NUMBER OF EXAMINEE

MAILED QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED MARCH-MAY 1977

passers and 31 percent of the non-passers responding to questionnaires. Thus, the manifest potential sources of bias is indicated in the differential return rate between passers and non-passers. Non-passers were more difficult to contact in the mail survey (more undeliverable mail) and the telephone survey described below.

Telephone survey. A telephone survey was conducted from May 20 to June 3 to increase the return rate and to estimate the effects of non-response bias. A total of 40 examinees (20 passers and 20 non-passers) were contacted and read the questionnaire over the telephone. It took approximately 300 telephone calls to contact successfully 40 examinees. Each interview took between 15 and 40 minutes to complete. Some of the reasons the examinees gave for not returning the mail questionnaire were that the questionnaire was too long, the examinee never received the questionnaire, the examinee was not interested in filling in the questionnaire, the examinee did not want to participate, and the examinee lost the questionnaire. The opportunity for personal interaction with the examinees was revealing in itself. Some observations by the interviewer are worth reporting:

- Passers were more responsive than non-passers.
- Passers required less clarification of the questions.
- Some non-passers claimed they had never received their test scores.

- Male examinees were more difficult to locate than female examinees.

A question-by-question comparison of responses between the examinees contacted by telephone and the examinees responding by mail revealed no apparent meaningful discrepancies.[1]

Questionnaire Results[2]

Questions began with events that occurred prior to the December, 1975, CHSPE and covered the interval up to the time that the examinee completed the form. The major areas probed on the questionnaire related to demographic information, affective information, and information relating to decision-making considerations. Demographic data are important in order to verify the characteristics of the population of test-takers and to discover those individuals for whom the CHSPE program functions as an option. The decision-making section covers a very large area, with questions designed to examine various settings (e.g., job and school situations), external opinions (e.g., parents and counselors), and personal reasons which contributed to the

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1. In general, the mean value responses for non-respondents will probably differ from respondents. When these discrepancies are large or when the non-response rate is abysmally low, there are procedures (e.g., weighting class adjustments) to correct for the differences. Neither condition is true of these data.

2. Open-ended responses and non-response roles by question appear in Appendix V.

decision to take the CHSPE. Moreover, the decisions made by examinees after taking the CHSPE were probed. Finally, attitudes toward school and self were solicited to describe the examinee population and to contrast passers and failers.

Demographic profile. The sample consists of 543 individuals, of whom 61 percent passed the December, 1975, CHSPE, 38 percent did not pass, and 1 percent did not report as passing or failing.[1] The breakdown on sex is 45 percent male and 55 percent female. These percentages are within a few points of the population male/female proportions for all of the examinee cohorts.[2] The pass rate among sample male examinees is 67 percent, compared with 57 percent among sample female examinees.[3] The ages of the sample respondees at the time they filled in the questionnaire ranged from 17 to 19 years old: 32 percent were 17 years old; 52 percent were 18 years old; and 15 percent were 19 years old.

Examinees in the sample were asked to classify themselves as to the ethnic groups they considered themselves members of. The indication from the pre-CHSPE questionnaire is

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1. Six questionnaires were returned with the examinee ID Code ripped off.
2. Population information on sex was obtained from the registration form.
3. The male pass rate is higher than the female pass rate for both the December, 1975, and the March, 1976, cohorts. The trend is reversed with the November, 1976, administration, so that the female pass rate is from 5 to 10 percentage points higher than the male pass rate. The reason for this is that females do much better on the writing sample. This dual cut-off modus operandi occurred initially with the November, 1976, administration and continues today.

that the CHSPE has attracted predominantly white individuals.[1] The sample statistics do not contradict that finding. Approximately 87 percent of those who responded to the ethnic association question reported themselves as white. The other categories and percent responding are black (1 percent), Hispanic (2 percent), American Indian (1 percent), Asian (1 percent), Filipino (1 percent), and other (7 percent). Four percent of the sample failed to respond to the question. There are no simple answers to the question of why minority examinees are not represented in greater numbers, parcicularly with the pattern of higher drop-out rates among minority students shown in Table 4. Moreover, almost two-thirds of the dropouts leave school in the

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1. There have been some problems with the credibility of the ethnic classification on the pre-CHSPE questionnaire--17 percent reported themselves as American Indian, prompting the California State Department of Education to publish the following disclaimer:

> Staff in the State Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation and Research (OPER) believe that responses to question number 16 do not accurately reflect the ethnic distribution of those who responded to the question. The ethnic categories and definitions used in the question are those promulgated by the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Education and recommended by that Office for use by all education researchers nationwide so as to permit uniform comparability of ethnically related data. As such, the ethnic categories and definitions were intended primarily for third-person descriptive use by information gatherers--not for independent self-identification by members of research populations. OPER staff believe that a significant number of CHSPE examinees simply misunderstood one or more of the Office of Education definitions.

TABLE 4

ETHNIC GROUP COMPOSITION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, BY YEAR OF LEAVING SCHOOL[a]

Ethnic Group of Dropout	Number of High School Dropouts, by Year and Ethnic Group			Statewide percents K-12, by Ethnic Group
	1973-74	1974-75	Total	
American Indian	38 0.5%	55 0.8%	93 0.7%	0.5% 0.5%
Asian American	82 0.6%	87 1.3%	169 1.2%	3.0%
Philippine Islander	54 0.8%	68 1.0%	122 0.9%	------
Black	694 10.0%	704 10.1%	1,398 10.1%	9.8%
Hispanic	1,926 27.7%	1,801 26.0%	3,727 26.8%	17.2%
White	4,170 59.9%	4,217 60.8%	8,387 60.3%	69.5%
Total	6,964	6,932	13,896[b] 100.0%	100.0%

a) Source: The California High School Dropout Survey 1973-74 and 1974-75. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1976.

b) The schools responding to the survey were unable to provide ethnic group data, by year of leaving school, for 1,125 of the 15,021 total dropouts.

professionals is somewhat suspect in view of the considerably lower number (29 percent) of four-year and graduate degree holders. The passing rate for examinees was highest among those reporting father's/guardian's occupation as professional and lowest among those reporting father's/guardian's occupation as unskilled or unemployed. The occupational category most frequently selected (27 percent) for mother/guardian is semi-professional (which includes clerical, sales workers, and technicians), closely followed in frequency selected (23 percent) by the category not employed. Again, the passing rate among professionals' and semi-professionals' progeny is higher than that of the progeny of the unemployed.

The sample examinees also reported on the type of community in which they resided in December of 1975: 28 percent lived in a residential part of a large city; 26 percent lived in the suburbs; 3 percent lived in the inner part of a large city; 35 percent lived in a small town or city (not a suburb); and 8 percent reported living in a rural (not in a town) area. The highest pass rate (71 percent) occurs among suburban dwellers and the lowest pass rate (44 percent) is registered from those who reside in the inner part of a large city.

Decision points. The decision to take the CHSPE is a function of a multitude of sociological and psychological variables, clearly too complex a situation to posit etiological considerations. However, documenting the setting and the

relationships among variables is a prerequisite to the much more interesting causal analysis. School, home, and employment conditions, to list a few, contribute to an understanding (in the sense of describing concomitant relationships) of why persons elect to take the CHSPE and what they do subsequently.

The availability and reliability of information about the CHSPE is important in that the schools, for the most part, have control over who is exposed to the program. The lack of exposure from the non-school media has been rather blatant considering that few individuals in the sample heard about the CHSPE from TV (6 percent), radio (4 percent), or magazines (1 percent). Local newspapers did a better job, however, with nearly one-third of the sample reporting having read there about the CHSPE (as either a primary or secondary source). In the school environment, the most frequently referred to sources are announcements read to all students (41 percent), counselors (61 percent), and other students (46 percent). Counselors and other students are also the two most common sources of initial information about the CHSPE. A majority of the sample (51 percent) reported they learned the most about the CHSPE from the school counselor; the next most useful source was the local newspaper (10 percent). This pattern remained constant for passers and non-passers.

The choice of taking the CHSPE is certainly influenced by the advice given by family, friends, and school officials.

School officials (teachers, counselors, and administrators) were more discouraging, more neutral, and less enthusiastic than were either parents or fellow students. The most encouraging group was fellow students, followed in order of encouragement by parents, counselors, teachers, and administrators. The average percent of school officials who discouraged the sample from taking the CHSPE was 13 percent, compared with the average percent of parents who discouraged (7 percent) and students who discouraged (3 percent). Presumably, those who knew of the CHSPE but did not take it were much more convincingly discouraged.

In December, 1975, 80 percent of the sample was attending regular daytime high school, 12 percent was attending continuation high school, 1 percent was attending parochial or private schools, 1 percent was in adult school, and 6 percent was not attending school.[1] The pass rate was highest for those not attending school (67 percent), followed by regular high school attendees (64 percent), and continuation school attendees (52 percent).[2] The higher pass rate for those not attending is somewhat surprising since the pre-CHSPE questionnaires for all administrations show regular high school attendees passing at a higher rate. (A

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1. The actual percent of non-school attendees is probably close to 10 percent, as reported on the pre-CHSPE questionnaires. The low number reported for the sample is likely a result of a non-response underestimate.

2. Pass rates for the other categories were ignored since there were only five individuals in each category.

likely explanation is selection: Only the successful dropouts returned the questionnaire.)

Among those in high school the breakdown by type of high school program is as follows: basic, general, regular, 68 percent; college prep, 17 percent; business, vocational, industrial arts, homemaking, 11 percent; and, other, 4 percent. The pass rate for the college prep examinees (83 percent) was higher than for either those in a vocational program (62 percent) or those in a general program (54 percent). About one-third of the sample felt that at the time of the December, 1975, administration they would not have enough credits to graduate with their class. The pass rate for this group was one-third lower than the pass rate for the group with enough credits to graduate on time.

The condition of the job market is an important consideration for those potential examinees who plan to enter directly in the labor force. In times of high unemployment, the disincentives may well be too great to leave voluntarily the safe confines of high school. However, the possibility of increasing both the number of hours worked weekly and promotional opportunities for someone already a part of the labor force is an alluring option. Nearly 50 percent of the sample had a paying job in December, 1975, with 93 percent working more than nine hours a week. Nearly a year and a half later, 20 percent report having the same job. The pass rate is a few percentage points higher among working examinees and highest among those working between 10

to 29 hours per week. Although half the sample reported holding a paying job in December, 1975, nearly all (94 percent) of these examinees lived with their families. Only 4 percent reported living in their own place, alone, or with someone else. Nearly 38 percent reported that they contributed nothing to their support; 53 percent reported contributing some or half of their support expenses; and 9 percent were mostly or completely self-supporting. Thus, at the time of the December, 1975, CHSPE, the sample individuals were located in a family situation, few were supporting themselves, many were holding paying jobs (to contribute some toward their support) and over half had enough credits to graduate on time. With these basic circumstances, which prima facie are far from compelling, the motivational reasons why those individuals elected to take the CHSPE may be more related to other variables such as attitude toward school.

The sample examinees were asked to what degree they were motivated to take the CHSPE by various reasons. There were four responses to indicate the degree of motivation for each reason: not at all; to some extent; to a moderate extent; and, to a great extent. About one-third reported not liking high school to a great extent; the pass rate was somewhat higher for this group, perhaps indicative of greater motivation. Approximately 20 percent indicated that not liking high school was not a motivating factor in the choice to take the CHSPE.

Close to one-third of the examinees reported wanting (to a great extent) to leave high school to earn money, although only 10 percent stated that they had (to a great extent) leave high school to earn money. Indeed, close to 70 percent reported that having to leave was not at all a motivating reason but many wanted (78 percent to some extent or greater) to leave and enter the labor force. The sample examinees were asked whether the freedom from required courses, along with options of taking a lighter or more interesting course, was a motivating force in the decision to take the CHSPE. Nearly half reported that they were not at all motivated by the possibility of increased freedom within the school environment. Less than one-fifth reported being motivated to a great extent by these considerations. Clearly then, freedom from the curriculum structure of the school was not an overriding concern among the majority. The cynosure among the reasons was that of wanting the option of leaving school early. Nearly two-thirds of the sample replied they were motivated to a great extent by the desire to have the option of leaving school early. Only 10 percent reported this reason was not at all a motivation for taking the CHSPE. Thus, while many individuals were choosing the CHSPE with a specific purpose in mind, the majority elected to take it with the aim of maximizing their choices. Realizing this fact leads one to hypothesize that this group is more sophisticated, in the sense of perceiving the CHSPE as something which will likely lead to greater control over their own options in the next few years, than is perhaps commonly thought.

Many (75 percent) of the sample examinees reported (to some extent or more) taking the CHSPE to see what it was like, although only one-fifth reported as being motivated by curiosity alone to a great extent. Not many (11 percent) reported (to a great extent) taking the CHSPE to gain another credential besides a diploma, although 50 percent reported (to a great extent) wanting at least a high school diploma equivalent.

Shown in Table 5 are summary results for the 11 questions on motivation. The one strong motivational reason given by the group is that of gaining the option of leaving school early. Most of the responses on the other questions hover around the mean value of the response scale (2.5).

Future plans. At the time of the December CHSPE, most (58 percent) examinees had immediate future plans either to attend college (60 percent indicated a preference to attend a community college), get a job, or both. Less than 10 percent reported immediate future plans of joining one of the military services, and 8 percent planned to become homemakers.[1] Nearly one-third reported being undecided about plans for the immediate future. Only 20 percent reported that they wanted to stay in high school for at least a while longer, and 4 percent indicated that they wanted to remain in high school and receive a regular diploma.

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1. Categories were not mutually exclusive so many respondees chose several options.

TABLE 5

The Degree of Motivation for Reasons
Why the December, 1975, Sample Elected to
Take the CHSPE

BELOW ARE SOME POSSIBLE REASONS WHY YOU MIGHT HAVE TAKEN THE DECEMBER, 1975, CHSPE. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU WERE MOTIVATED BY EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

	Not at all	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Mean	Standard deviation
I didn't like high school	19%	29%	20%	32%	2.6	.05
I wanted to be sure I'd have at least a diploma equivalent	25	11	13	51	2.9	.06
I wanted to leave high school and go to work	24	22	20	34	2.6	1.18
I had to leave high school to earn money	67	15	8	10	1.6	1.00
I wanted to leave high school and go to college	35	24	18	23	2.30	1.18
I wanted to be free from taking some of the usual required high school courses--and to take a lighter load	54	23	11	12	1.80	1.04
I wanted to be free from taking some of the usual required high school courses--and to take different courses that would be more interesting	43	21	14	22	2.15	1.20

	Not at all	To some extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Mean	Standard deviatio
I wanted to see whether I could pass the CHSPE	19%	27%	19%	35%	2.70	1.14
I wanted to see what the CHSPE would be like	26	32	20	22	2.39	1.09
I wanted another credential besides a diploma	66	15	8	11	1.65	1.03
I wanted to have the option of leaving school early	10	12	14	64	3.33	1.03

Immediately after the December, 1975, CHSPE. Almost half (47 percent) of the sample reported their performance on the December CHSPE affected their work or school situation within the few months following the exam. Close to two-thirds of the passers reported a change, while less than one-third of the non-passers indicated a change. The pattern of changes which actually occurred was in agreement with stated future plans: categories accounting for the majority of changes relate to working, searching for a job, or attending college (predominantly community colleges). These are the categories which, for the most part, the passers selected, since non-passers would have been handicapped without a diploma equivalent. The few (n=75) non-passers who indicated a change in activity elected to work or search for a job, with half electing to attend continuation school, night, or adult high school.

Current activities. Shown in Table 6 are the responses to the question "What are you doing now?" The most frequently selected activities are working and attending college or other schooling. Of particular interest is that some of those who passed are still in the secondary school system (regular high school, continuation school, ROC/ROP, or night or adult school). Moreover, the percentage attending college or some other schooling is much less than the percentage who indicated in December, 1975, that they wanted to attend college: As a future preference, 58 percent indicated college; but only 30 percent are currently attending college.

TABLE 6

Current Activities

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

	% YES[a]	% PASS[b]
Working	57	65
Looking for a job	23	60
Attending regular daytime high school	11	39
Attending continuation school	2	11
ROC/ROP	3	29
Night or adult school	8	47
Military service	6	72
Being a homemaker	13	56
Attending college or other schooling[c]	30	74
Other	10	61

a) Percents in this column do not sum to 100 since categories are not mutually exclusive.
b) Entries in this column are the percentage of those responding "yes" who also passed the December, 1975, CHSPE.
c) The percent attending school by categories is as follows: community college, 72 percent; four-year college, 12 percent; vocational or trade school, 7 percent; business school, 4 percent; and other, 5 percent.

Among those currently employed in paying jobs, 15 percent report their jobs have not changed since December, 1975; 34 percent report they are holding the same jobs they had in the spring of 1976. Surprisingly, only slightly more than one-third (37 percent) were asked, at the time they were hired, if they had a high school diploma or equivalent. This fact may be a result of the respondees indicating an oral question at the time of the interview rather than including a written response on an application form. Almost one-half (47 percent) of those who are currently working are working 40 or more hours a week.

As expected, the number reporting themselves mostly or completely self-supporting, since December, 1975, and living in their own place, have significantly increased: Forty-one percent are self-supporting and 21 percent live in their own place, increases from 32 percent and 17 percent, respectively. Furthermore, passers and non-passers are now equally self-supporting (41 percent of passers and 41 percent of non-passers are self-supporting).

Some of the December sample went on and received regular high school diplomas: Sixteen percent of the sample hold regular diplomas and 43 percent of these also were awarded CHSPE certificates as a result of passing the December, 1975, exam. In other words, nearly a year and a half after the administration of the December, 1975, CHSPE, approximately 7 percent of the total sample both passed the December CHSPE and received regular high school diplomas. An additional

7 percent of the passers indicated they would definitely (5 percent) or probably (2 percent) receive regular high school diplomas in the near future.[1]

The passers. Those who passed the CHSPE[2] were asked if they found the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency accepted on an equal basis with a regular high school diploma. Shown in the top half of Table 7 are the responses to the question for the three categories of school, military, and jobs. Focusing on the "no" response category gives an indication of the areas in which and the extent to which the CHSPE certificate is not granted parity with a locally issued diploma. Ignoring the last two response categories (does not apply and I don't know) yields a different comparison, since only those who used the certificate in a particular situation and knew of the outcome are considered. Passers should not experience difficulty with acceptance of the CHSPE certificate within the State of California, since it must by law be afforded the status of a locally-awarded diploma by California public post-secondary institutions.[3] It may be that private colleges within California

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1. Most of these would probably belong to the June, 1977, graduating class, the mid-year juniors at the time of the December CHSPE.
2. Cf. pass rates on subsequent administrations in the following paragraphs on "The non-passers."
3. Community colleges must by law accept either the CHSPE certificate or a local diploma as sufficient for admission. The University of California and the California State University and Colleges treat the local diploma/CHSPE certificate as a necessary but not alone sufficient condition for acceptance.

TABLE 7

The Acceptance of the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency
Vis-a-Vis the Regular Diploma

THE STATE ISSUES THE HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY, WHICH IS THE LEGAL EQUIVALENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. HAVE YOU FOUND THAT THIS CERTIFICATE IS ACCEPTED ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS?

	n	Yes	No	Does not Apply	I don't Know
Getting into school	349	46%	5%	8%	41%
Getting into the military	344	17	1	17	65
Getting a job	350	41	6	9	44

Percentages for only two categories[a]

	n	Yes	No
Getting into school	178	90%	10%
Getting into the military	63	92	8
Getting a job	163	88	12

a) Only those who responded either yes or no were considered for this table.

and public and private institutions outside California do not accept the CHSPE certificate, although no such instances have been reported to the Department of Education and several instances of acceptance by such institutions have been reported. The military services have not been disinclined toward accepting the CHSPE certificate on an equal basis with the General Educational Development (GED) exam certificate; however, both certificates are accorded a somewhat lower status than locally awarded diplomas.[1] Recruiters report that a locally awarded diploma at least guarantees a degree of perserverance on the part of the holder.

The situation in the labor market is similar, in that locally awarded diploma holders are generally older and more experienced than those 16- or 17-year olds holding CHSPE Certificates of Proficiency. Many employers have their own battery of tests to measure "proficiency" and need not rely on external validation via a high school diploma or diploma equivalent. Additionally, entry into some trade unions is restricted for individuals under 18 years of age.

The particular reasons why these individuals reported the CHSPE certificate not equal to a high school diploma are complex and unknown: Perhaps each case has its idiosyncratic elements which led to the rejection. In the absence of empirical data on CHSPE graduates, employers may elect

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1. Local army and navy recruiters report that there are some programs (e.g., the Navy's Nuclear program) which require a regular diploma for admission. This policy is currently under revision and may be changed, however.

to assume a conservative strategy in their selection process and accept only the "marginals" who are regular diploma or GED certificate holders. Given the high percentage of "yes" and "I don't know" responses, it is likely that the CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency is viewed at least as co-equal with the GED. Presumably, most of the examinees viewed the CHSPE certificate as equivalent to a regular diploma.[1] There are no data available for the non-examinee school population.

Three-fourths of the passers reported they left school earlier than they otherwise would have, as a result of passing the CHSPE. Most (79 percent) left school within a month, 13 percent left within two to four months and 8 percent left within five months to a year. Slightly more than half left to work, and 41 percent left to attend college or other schooling. Six percent indicated they joined the military, and 7 percent went on to become homemakers. Eighteen percent reported they were undecided about their future, and 10 percent indicated they had another plan.[2]

Those who chose to leave school and who were under 18 years of age needed written parental permission. Most (80 percent) were able to obtain easily their parent's signature; 15 percent reported some difficulty and 2 percent reported a lot of difficulty--but only 3 percent of the parents refused.

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1. The only evidence on this point is presented in the following paragraphs on "The non-passers."
2. The categories are not mutually exclusive.

The examinee group with the most potential influence in the high school is the passers who remain in school (25 percent of the passers chose to remain). These individuals are in the unique position of being free from the normal ultimate threat of withholding the diploma, and the extent to which they perceive this "power" determines the nature of the interaction between the school personnel and themselves. Shown in Table 8 is this group's response to several questions about how they exercised their newly acquired "freedom." Apparently, these individuals chose, for the most part, not to disrupt the normal pattern of continuing in the same way (56 percent) or taking all the required courses for graduation (66 percent). With the pressure relieved, 41 percent reported they enjoyed school more, 35 percent attended fewer hours than before passing the exam, 24 percent attended less regularly than before and 23 percent signed up for more non-required courses. That a greater number of the passers who remained in school chose the traditional diploma route is both a function of personal desires and the school administration's attitude. The attitude of school administrators toward those who pass and remain in school is basically no different from what it was before--they are still expected to meet the requirements for graduation.[1] Those who choose to remain are more likely to be better adapted to the school environment, to

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1. This attitude is explored more fully in Section 4.

TABLE 8

The School Plans of CHSPE Passers Who Remained in School

IF YOU REMAINED IN SCHOOL AFTER PASSING THE CHSPE, DID YOU....

	% YES
Sign up for more non-required courses?	23
Request independent studies?	12
Request exemption from certain school rules?	12
Study more?	3
Attend less regularly than before passing?	24
Show more interest in school?	23
Attend fewer hours than before passing?	35
Take all the required courses for graduation?	66
Enjoy school more?	41
Engage in additional extra curricular activities?	22
Continue in the same way, as if you hadn't passed?	56

be headed for a four-year college, and to have taken the CHSPE to increase their options.

The non-passers. Approximately one-fourth of those who failed the December, 1975, CHSPE re-took it in March, 1976, with a success rate of 37 percent. Five individuals from the sample took the November, 1976, CHSPE, and one person passed.

Some reasons for not re-taking the CHSPE, and the extent to which these persons were motivated by these reasons, are displayed in Table 9. Slightly less than one-third (31 percent) indicated being motivated at least to some extent by the reason that they perceived the CHSPE as not equivalent to a regular diploma. Neither the difficulty of the exam nor the fear of failure was viewed as a particularly strong motivating reason for not re-taking the CHSPE but rather several less spectacular reasons.

Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) reported that they did not change their school or work situation after taking the CHSPE. In fact, 24 percent went on to receive a regular diploma. Of the 38 percent who did change their activities, more than 45 percent reported working and 44 percent reported that they were looking for a job. One-third reported attending night or adult school, and 13 percent became homemakers.

At the time of completion of the questionnaire, more than half (52 percent) reported they were working and 24 percent were looking for jobs. Fewer reported being involved

TABLE 9

Why Non-passers Did Not re-take the CHSPE

BELOW ARE SOME POSSIBLE REASONS FOR NOT TAKING THE CHSPE AGAIN. INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU WERE MOTIVATED BY EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

	(1) Not at all	(2) To some extent	(3) To a moderate extent	(4) To a great extent	n	Mean	Standard deviation
I decided to stay in school until regular graduation	49%	14%	14%	23%	155	2.1	1.2
I thought I'd fail again	45	23	15	18	155	2.1	1.1
I couldn't see paying another $10	44	19	15	23	156	2.2	1.2
I didn't trust a CHSPE certificate as a real equivalent to a regular diploma	69	17	8	6	156	1.5	0.9
I found the exam too difficult	51	33	10	6	159	1.7	0.9
Other reason	56	5	4	36	81	2.2	1.4

in other activities: 4 percent in continuation schools, 4 percent in the military services, 18 percent attending regular high schools, 16 percent being homemakers, and 20 percent in college or other schooling.[1]

Affective variables. There are two sections on the questionnaire which probe the affective domain. One section contains questions on how examinees feel about high school; the other section contains a hodge-podge of items, including self-esteem and self-concept items.

The item responses indicating attitude toward high school are summarized in Table 10. Interestingly, not many feel strongly (5 percent) that high school has required a lot of work. Moreover, the highest extreme percentage of responses in the direction of a negative attitude toward high school occurred in response to questions on the usefulness of knowledge taught in high school (28 percent), the fact that high school has been boring (30 percent), and that high school has a lot to offer (25 percent).

A school attitude scale was constructed by taking the average of the first three items on Table 10. This continuous variable was then dichotomized at the mean to create two groups: one characterized by positive attitudes toward school and one characterized by a not-so-positive attitude toward school.

With the independent variable pass/fail status and the

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1. Again, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

TABLE 10

Attitude Toward High School for the December CHSPE Sample

BELOW ARE SOME REMARKS THAT MAY DESCRIBE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL. ON THE SCALE, INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5	Mean	Standard deviation
a) High school has been fun	21%	21%	32%	15%	11%	2.7	1.3
b) High school has taught me a lot that will be useful	28	28	22	13	9	2.5	1.3
c) High school has been boring	12	16	24	18	30	3.4	1.4
d) High school has required a lot of work	24	32	28	11	5	2.4	1.1
e) I have had a lot of flexibility in planning my courses and programs	14	20	26	22	18	3.1	1.3
f) There hasn't been enough variety in the kinds of courses offered	12	16	23	19	30	3.8	1.4
g) There have been too many required courses	15	16	29	18	22	3.2	1.3
h) High school has a lot to offer	25	21	27	13	13	2.7	1.3

dependent variable school attitude, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed no significant difference between the two groups. As expected, the Chi-square test with pass/fail status as one variable and the dichotomous school attitude as the other variable in a contingency table revealed no significant dependencies. Breakdowns by other independent variables (age, sex, grade point average, self-support, ethnicity, and type of community) yielded a statistically significant result for only grade point average (GPA). The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 11. Apparently, a negative attitude toward high school for the sample group is a ubiquitous phenomenon with little sign of differential attitudes among subgroups.

The item responses to statements about feelings toward self are summarized in Table 12. Most of the mean values are close to the positive end points of the scale, an indication of strong positive feelings toward self.

A modest self-esteem index was computed by averaging questions a, b, c, and g of Table 12. As with the school attitude variable, this continuous variable was dichotomized at the mean to create two groups differing in self-esteem. Considering the independent variable as pass/fail status and the criterion variable the value of the self-esteem index, an analysis of variance showed a significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between the passers and non-passers. The analysis of the contingency table with pass/fail and high/low self-esteem also yielded a significant difference.

TABLE 11

ANOVA Summary with Attitude Toward
High School as the Dependent Variable

Independent Variable: GPA

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
A/B	132	2.86	1.02
B/C	195	2.68	1.01
C	120	2.40	0.08
C/D	72	2.31	0.91
D/F	14	2.40	1.02

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.00	4	5.50		
Within Groups	499.18	528	.95	5.82	.0001

TABLE 12

Feelings Toward Self for the December CHSPE Sample

BELOW ARE SOME STATEMENTS ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF. ON THE SCALE, INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT.

		Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5	Mean	Standard deviation
a)	I believe I have a number of good qualities	0%	1%	17%	34%	48%	4.3	0.8
b)	I often wish I were someone else	59	21	13	5	3	1.7	1.0
c)	I have confidence in myself	2	5	17	36	40	4.1	1.0
d)	There is a lot I can do to make my life better than it is	3	7	19	26	45	4.0	1.1
e)	I get bored easily	19	22	25	18	16	2.9	1.3
f)	I have a lot to look forward to	1	3	12	22	61	4.4	0.9
g)	Sometimes I feel I just can't learn	58	19	12	7	4	1.8	1.1
h)	I have friends I can trust	3	6	15	24	52	4.2	1.1
i)	My peers greatly influence my decisions	34	25	25	11	5	2.3	1.2

Additional one-way ANOVA's with other independent variables yielded statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) differences on sex (males higher), age (the higher the age, the higher the self-esteem), high school grade point average (higher grade-points with higher self-esteem), and self-support (the greater the degree of self-support the higher the self-esteem). Shown in Table 13 are the ANOVA summaries for the significant variables. Statistically significant differences on the self-esteem index were not found when the independent variable was type of community, parental schooling, or ethnicity.

Examinee Profile

While there is probably no "typical" CHSPE examinee, certain trends emerge from an examination of the characteristics of the average respondee. In the summary which follows, some characteristics of the December, 1975, sample are summarized and highlighted as being, more or less, representative of CHSPE cohorts.

- Slightly more females (55 percent) than males (45 percent) took the CHSPE.
- The pass rate for males was higher than for females, although, since the November, 1976, administration, females have passed at a higher rate than males.
- The majority (87 percent) of examinees reported themselves as white, while only 1 percent reported themselves as black and 2 percent reported themselves as hispanic.

TABLE 13

ANOVA Summaries with Self-esteem as the Dependent Variable

Independent Variable: Pass/Fail

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Passers	332	4.31	0.62
Non-passers	205	3.98	0.80

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.82	1	13.82		
Within Groups	262.57	535	0.49	28.20	0.0000

Independent Variable: Sex

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Males	245	4.27	0.64
Females	296	4.13	0.67

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.48	1	2.48		
Within Groups	240.05	539	0.44	5.57	0.02

Independent Variable: Age

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
17 year olds	176	4.05	0.68
18 year olds	282	4.27	0.66
19 year olds	83	4.30	0.64

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.06	2	3.03		
Within Groups	236.46	538	0.44	6.90	0.0011

Independent Variable: GPA

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
A/B	132	4.38	0.55
B/C	195	4.21	0.68
C	120	4.07	0.75
C/D	72	4.03	0.83
D/F	14	3.96	0.59

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.61	4	2.15		
Within Groups	247.60	528	0.47	4.6	0.0012

Independent Variable: Self-support

	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Most or Complete	221	4.35	0.60
Half	109	4.09	0.77
Some	119	4.09	0.69
None	89	4.06	0.56

Source	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.53	3	3.18		
Within Groups	249.34	534	0.47	6.81	0.0002

- The pass rate among examinees increases as a function of greater educational attainment by their parents.
- The passing rate for examinees was highest among those who reported their father's occupation as "professional" and lowest among those who reported their father's occupation as "unskilled" or "unemployed."
- Slightly more than one-third reported living in a small town or city (not a suburb); 28 percent in a residential part of a large city; and 25 percent in a suburb. The highest pass rate occurred among suburban dwellers and the lowest pass rate occurred among those who reside in the inner part of large cities.
- One-half the examinees reported they learned the most about the CHSPE from their school counselor.
- Examinee's parents and peers were more encouraging than school officials in giving advice on whether to take the CHSPE.
- The majority of examinees (80 percent) were attending regular daytime high school; 12 percent were attending continuation high school; and 6 percent were not attending school.
- About two-thirds of the sample took the CHSPE even though they believed they would graduate on schedule with their class.

- Nearly one-half the sample had paying jobs at the time they took the CHSPE, and this group had a higher pass rate than those who did not have paying jobs.
- Almost all (94 percent) of the sample examinees lived with their families.
- Somewhat more than 80 percent of the sample reported that not liking high school motivated them to take the CHSPE.
- Approximately 10 percent of the sample reported they had ("to a great extent") to leave high school to earn money.
- Fewer than 20 percent of the sample reported the possibility of increased freedom within the school environment motivated them "to a great extent" to take the CHSPE.
- Nearly two-thirds of the sample replied they were motivated "to a great extent" to take the CHSPE in order to gain the option of leaving school early.
- Nearly two-thirds of the sample passers reported their performance on the December CHSPE affected their work or school situation within the few months following the exam. Most of the changes related to working, searching for a job, or attending college (predominantly community college).
- Approximately 7 percent of the sample passed the December CHSPE and received a regular diploma. This

percentage probably increased slightly as a result of the June, 1977, graduation which included some of the December, 1975, mid-year juniors.

- The CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency is generally accepted on an equal basis with the regular high school diploma. Among those 1975 examinees who had experience with either the acceptance or non-acceptance of the CHSPE certificate vis-a-vis a regular diploma, only a few reported they found the CHSPE certificate not in parity with a regular diploma for the following situations: getting into school, 10 percent; getting into the military, 8 percent; and getting a job, 12 percent.
- Most (75 percent) of the passers left school earlier than they otherwise would have, as a result of passing the CHSPE. More twelfth-grade passers (89 percent) than eleventh-grade passers (68 percent) left within one month of receiving their results.
- The majority (80 percent) of the passers easily obtained parental permission to leave school.
- Those passers (25 percent) who chose to remain in school chose, for the most part, not to disrupt their normal school pattern and took all the required courses for graduation.
- Approximately one-fourth of those who failed the December, 1975, CHSPE re-took the exam in March, 1976, with a pass rate of 37 percent.

- Slightly less than one-third of the non-passers who did not re-take the CHSPE indicated their decision was based in part on their perception that the CHSPE certificate was not equivalent to a regular diploma.
- One-quarter of the non-passers went on to receive a regular high school diploma.
- Examinees displayed a pervasive less-than-favorable attitude toward high school, with no difference in this regard between passers and non-passers. School grade point average is the only variable which showed a statistically significant difference on a school attitude scale--those with higher grades had more positive attitudes toward school.
- Passers had higher self-esteem than non-passers.

4. THE CHSPE AND THE SCHOOLS

THE CHSPE AND THE SCHOOLS

The way in which the CHSPE program, as an innovative element, weaves its way into the school structure is the salient issue about which this phase of the study revolved. How the schools accommodate the CHSPE program, given the powerful financial disincentives, largely determines the "success" of the program in the sense of presenting a true option to students. If large numbers of students are aware of the CHSPE and perceive it as an effective alternative, then the schools must adjust accordingly, presumably in the areas of counseling and curricular revision. Lack of student interest may be due to a number of reasons, many of them under the control of the schools.

A school questionnaire was constructed in an attempt to elucidate the relationship between the CHSPE program and a variety of school-related variables. The major strands of the questionnaire were as follows:

- What are the ways in which the CHSPE is publicized within the school?
- What are the characteristics of students who elect to take the CHSPE?
- Are students who pass the CHSPE and elect to remain in school treated any differently than other students?
- How do school personnel deal with those who fail the CHSPE (assuming they know the failers)?

- What curricular modifications are the result of the CHSPE program?
- What are the attitudes of various groups within the school toward the CHSPE?
- Is the potential loss of per-student state aid perceived as a problem?

The questionnaire was field tested in January and sent during the February 24 through March 1, 1977, period. Questionnaires were sent to 1,654 public and private high schools: 1,280 public high schools including public junior/senior high schools, senior high schools, evening high schools, adult high schools, and continuation high school, and 374 private high schools. Follow-up post cards were sent on March 7, 1977. Both the questionnaire and follow-up post card are reproduced in Appendix VI. Shown in Figure 3 is a graph of the number of daily returns from March through May. The return rates are as follows: regular high schools, 89 percent; continuation high schools, 71 percent, night or adult schools, 59 percent; alternative schools, 44 percent, and private or parochial, 58 percent. The questionnaire was directed to the person in each high school most knowledgeable about the CHSPE. In 42 percent of the cases this was a guidance counselor, in 30 percent of the cases the principal. Generally, guidance counselors know more about the "nuts and bolts" of the CHSPE than any other individuals in the school, and the counselor presumably also reflects school policy. School and district policy and opinion were stressed in the personal interview component of the study.

California High School Proficiency Examination
(CHSPE) Survey

Number of School Questionnaires Returned March-May 1977

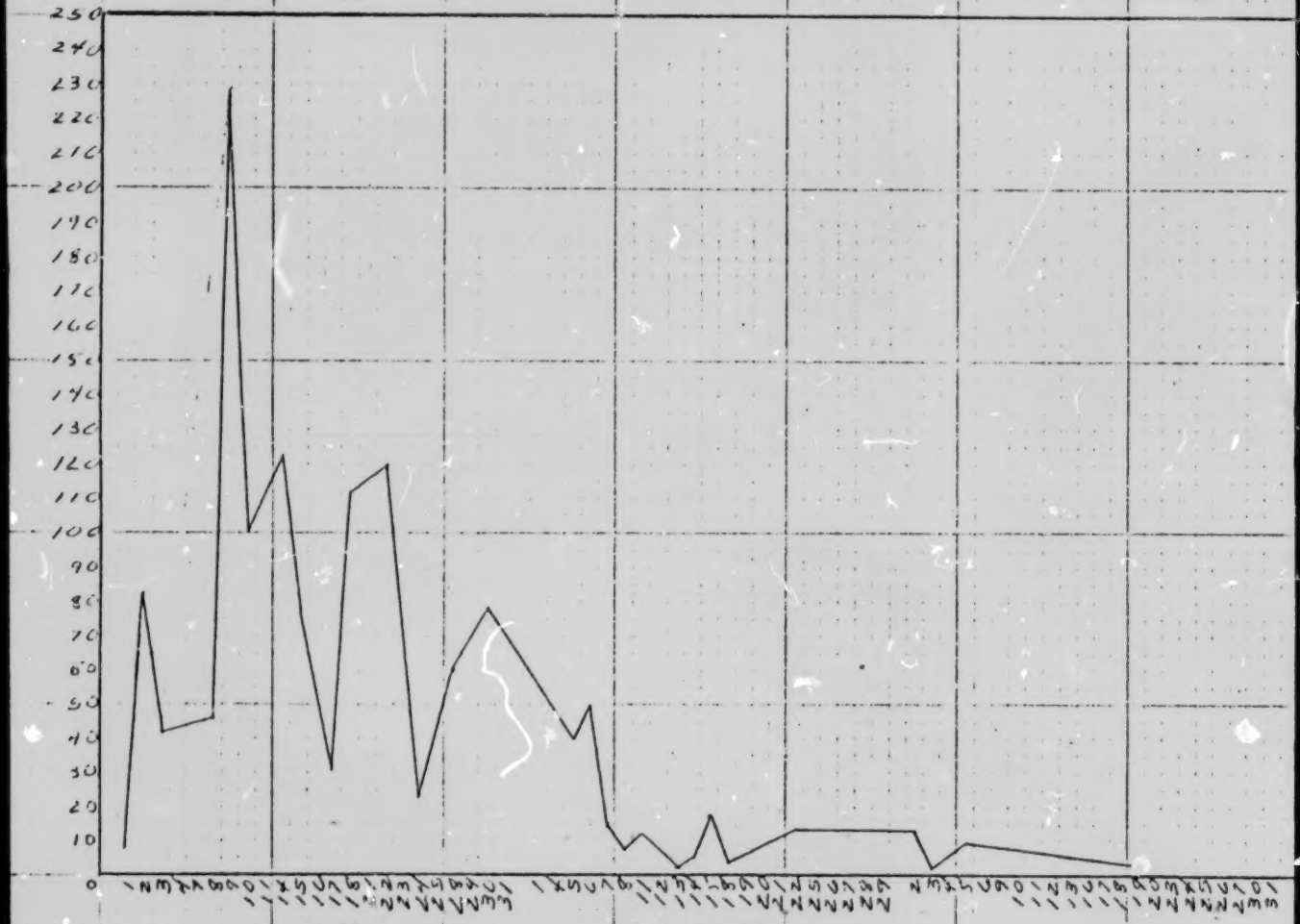

Figure 3

Continuation high school.[1] Other states may have alternative high schools, but California has the only mandated system of alternative high schools.[2] Continuation high schools deserve special attention since a disproportionately large number of CHSPE examinees come from these "special" high schools.

Continuation education has been in existence in California since 1919, when it was established as part-time schooling for young persons who left the full-time school to help support themselves and/or their families. However, because of the growth of welfare and social security programs, few young persons now leave school from economic necessity. Currently, continuation education is a program that leads toward a high school diploma, prepares its students for entrance into occupational training, and provides schooling which, accompanying employment, can contribute much to the individual's immediate and long-term interests. The program serves those who do not attend full-time schools. It provides for those who have special problems and offers an individualized program of instruction for each student. The educational objectives of continuation education are as follows:

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1. For a more detailed description of continuation high schools, refer to the Handbook on Continuation Education in California. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1973.
2. Eales, J. R. Continuation education--the system of alternative high schools in California. Continuation Education, Vol. 2, Number 2, February, 1977.

- To help the student know himself and understand his relationships with others.
- To help tne student acquire a high school diploma.
- To convince the student that he can be self-supporting and can advance in salary and position through proper training and preparation.
- To help the student practice money management by earning money to pay his debts promptly and to save money.
- To help the student develop principles for home and family living, including preparation for marriage.
- To encourage the student to engage in wholesome recreation.
- To encourage the student to practice good health habits and keep himself physically and mentally fit.
- To encourage the student to participate in constructive civic activities and to obey the law.
- To help the student to widen his knowledge and appreciation of his cultural heritage.
- To help the student enter occupational training or find satisfactory employment.

While continuation education students have special problems, they also have the same needs as full-time students for the realization of individual goals, effective human relationships, economic independence, and citizenship. A primary need for most of these individuals is a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The largest single group of students requiring attention through the continuation education program consists of those who drop out of full-time school or who are potential dropouts with problems that require they transfer from the regular school. Many of these students exhibit antisocial behavior, and, as a result, create problems for themselves and for the community. When any decrease in job opportunity for the unskilled occurs, dropouts often are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. The continuation education program leading to a diploma is important to this group and to society because of its immediate conservation of human resources and its long-term value in improving employability.

Students served by the continuation education program include those returning to school after long periods of absence, those transferring or enrolling late, those needing special guidance, those involved in juvenile court action, those with behavioral problems, and those needing rehabilitation or readjustment training for other reasons.

It must not be assumed, however, that maladjusted students are the only ones served by continuation education. Students who are well adjusted enroll in this program for a variety of reasons. Many attend classes on a voluntary basis after they have reached the age limit for compulsory school attendance. The more flexible features of the continuation education program stimulate a greater effort and often revive latent ambition for educational advancement.

When the Education Code was changed in 1919 to raise the compulsory attendance requirement to the age of eighteen, it retained the provision that allowed some children under the age of eighteen to work. Such students were eligible, under certain circumstances, to be exempt from full-time school attendance and, in some instances, from part-time attendance. Under the present continuation education law, some persons under the age of eighteen are eligible to attend part-time continuation classes. Students are required to attend school, with some exceptions, on a full- or part-time basis, until their eighteenth birthday or until they have graduated from high school.

The continuation education student, like the regular, full-time student, is required to attend school. His parents are responsible for his attendance. If the student is truant, his unexcused absences are in theory brought to the attention of the juvenile court in the county of his residence.

The growth of continuation education in the last five years has been steady. In 1971-72 the school districts of California which maintained high schools provided 237 continuation schools plus four schools in districts that maintained both schools and classes (on regular high school campuses), while 45 districts provided classes only. The total student enrollment in continuation education during the year was 61,868. Of this enrollment, 6,778 graduated. Five years later, in 1975-76, the enrollment in continuation

education had increased to 87,872. There were 311 continuation schools as compared with the 241 that existed five years before. The number of districts maintaining classes only had dropped to 27 and 10,047 continuation students received high school diplomas during 1975-76. A more complete picture of continuation education in 1975-76 is shown in Table 14.

Questionnaire Analysis [1]

Shown in Table 15 is a listing, by main position, of those who filled in the questionnaire. Counselors and principals accounted for 90 percent of those responding to the questionnaire. Virtually all (90 percent) of the respondees reported having seen and read the CHSPE Information Bulletin, a guarantee of at least minimal knowledge about the CHSPE. Indeed, this group of respondees probably represents the most knowledgeable group in the school (cf. Section 4 on Personal Interviews where knowledge of the CHSPE program was rather limited).

School characteristics. The total survey of 1,320 schools included the following: 59 percent public, regular daytime; 17 percent public, continuation schools; 9 percent public, night or adult school; 2 percent public, alternative school; 9 percent parochial or religious; and 3 percent other private. Nearly two-thirds of the schools reported offering a regular, comprehensive program, 22 percent reported offering a basic skills or continuation program, 10 percent reported offering a college prepatory program, and 2 percent reported

1. Open-ended responses and non-response rates by question appear in Appendix VII.

TABLE 14

DATA CONCERNING CONTINUATION EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1975-76[a]

1.	Total districts providing high school education	366
2.	Number of districts providing continuation schools only	258
3.	Number of districts providing both schools and classes	2
4.	Number of districts providing continuation classes only	27
5.	Number of districts enrolling students in ROP/ROC only	6
6.	Number of districts exempted from continuation education	64
7.	Number of school districts participating in a county-operated program	9
8.	Number of continuation high schools maintained by 260 districts	311
9.	Total students enrolled in continuation education, 1975-76	87,872
10.	Total students enrolled in continuation education in October, 1975	40,114
11.	Total boys enrolled in continuation education, 1975-76	51,431
12.	Total girls enrolled in continuation education, 1975-76	36,441
13.	Total students enrolled for 15 hours or more per week	80,630
14.	Total students 16 years of age and over	72,522
15.	Total students under 16 years of age	15,350
16.	Number of students enrolled as result of assignment by school authorities	51,746
	Number enrolled at own request	36,126
17.	Number leaving continuation education before the school year ended (for reasons other than graduation)	36,459
	Number leaving who transferred to another school	12,009
18.	Total number of continuation students who graduated from high school during the year	10,047
19.	Total continuation education students holding work permits	17,606
20.	Total continuation education students in work experience programs	15,343
21.	Ethnic composition of continuation programs	
	American Indian	934
	Black	10,803
	Oriental	650
	Spanish Surname	17,550
	Other	57,925
22.	Total certificated staff involved in continuation education	2,788
	Full-time	2,371
	Part-time	417
23.	Number of districts (out of 366) which provide opportunity education for high school students	108

a) Source: Eales, J. R. Continuation Education--the system of alternative high schools in California. Continuation Education, Vol. 2, Number 2, February, 1977.

TABLE 15

School Questionnaire Respondees

Position	Percent in Category
Head Counselor	31%
Guidance Counselors	12%
Principal	32%
Vice Principal	15%
Dean	.2%
Administrative Assistant	1%
Clerical Staff	0%
Teacher	2%
Other	5%

offering a vocational program. Shown in Table 16 through Table 23 are the school summaries, respectively, for ethnicity, tenth-grade dropouts, percent eligible for free or reduce-priced lunches, percent of students absent, housing in the schools' area, average income level of families whose children attend the school, school estimate of parental occupation, and a characterization of the area served by the school.

Publicity about the CHSPE. A common hypothesis to explain why greater numbers of students are not taking the CHSPE is that the schools provide very little publicity about the exam. The "quality" of the publicity is somewhat difficult to operationalize with frequency, duration, and type of publicity (and their interaction) in the picture. However, examining the type of publicity about the CHSPE used in the schools yields some notions about how aggressively the CHSPE is "sold." More active forms of publicity are announcements on the public address system, talks given in person, and notices sent home to all students. More passive forms of publicity are information posted on bulletin boards and information published in school newspapers. One form of publicity, counseling individual students, is active but hardly ubiquitous and fully under the control of the schools. This highly selective form of publicity is perhaps the most effective mode.

Shown in Table 24 are the responses to a question regarding

TABLE 16

Ethnic Composition of the Schools

PLEASE ESTIMATE WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR SCHOOL'S STUDENTS ARE MEMBERS OF EACH ETHNIC GROUP.

White	71%[a]
Black	10%
Hispanic	18%
American Indian	2%
Asian	3%
Filipino	2%
Other	2%

a) Entries are the mean percentages of all responses to each category, thus the sum is not 100%.

TABLE 17

Percent of June, 1976, Tenth-graders Who Dropped Out

WHAT PERCENT OF 10th GRADERS FROM THE CLASS OF JUNE, 1976, DROPPED OUT OF YOUR SCHOOL (EXCLUDE TRANSFERS TO OTHER SCHOOLS) BEFORE GRADUATING?

Percent of Tenth Grade Drop-outs	Percent Selecting the Category
0 - 4%	61%
5 - 9%	17%
10 - 14%	8%
15 - 19%	4%
20 - 24%	4%
25 - 29%	2%
30 - 34%	1%
35 - 39%	1%
40 -100%	2%

TABLE 18

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-priced Lunches

WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICED LUNCHES?

Percent Eligible	Percent Selecting the Category
0 - 9%	46%
10 - 19%	20%
20 - 29%	12%
30 - 39%	7%
40 - 49%	4%
50 -100%	10%

TABLE 19

Percent Absent on a Daily Basis

ON A TYPICAL DAY, APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR SCHOOL'S STUDENTS ARE ABSENT (BOTH EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED)

Percent Absent	Percent Selecting the Category
0 - 5%	18%
6 - 10%	44%
11 - 15%	18%
16 - 20%	8%
21 - 30%	7%
31 - 40%	4%
41 - 50%	1%
51 -100%	0%

TABLE 20

Housing Characteristics in the School's Area

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HOUSING IN YOUR SCHOOL'S AREA?

Category	Percent Selecting the Category
Almost all owner-occupied homes	13%
Mostly owner-occupied, some rental apartments	57%
Evenly mixed	24%
Mostly rental apartments, some owner-occupied homes	5%
Almost all rental apartments	1%

TABLE 21

School Estimate of Average Income Level of Families

WHAT IS YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE AVERAGE INCOME LEVEL OF FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN ATTEND YOUR SCHOOL?

Category	Percent Selecting the Category
High Income	2%
High - middle Income	16%
Middle Income	31%
Low - middle Income	40%
Low Income	11%

TABLE 22

School Estimate of Parental Occupations

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ATTEND YOUR SCHOOL?

Category	Percent Selecting the Category
Almost all white collar/ professional	6%
Mostly white collar, some blue collar	18%
Evenly mixed	26%
Mostly blue collar, some white collar	3%
Almost all blue collar/ laborer	12%

TABLE 23

Characterization of the Area Served by the School

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE AREA SERVED BY YOUR SCHOOL?

Category	Percent Selecting the Category
City of more than 300,000 population	17%
City of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000 and: usually characterized as by itself, not being near or part of a more populated area	6%
Located near a city of more than 300,000	7%
Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) or more than 25,000 but less than 100,000 and: usually characterized as by itself, not as being near or part of a more populated area	17%
Located near a city of more than 300,000	13%
Located near a city of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000	4%
Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) of 2,500 to 25,000 and: usually characterized as by itself, not being near or part of a more populated area	14%
Located near a city of more than 300,000	4%

Category	Percent Selecting the Category
Located near a city of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000	4%
Located near a city or town of more than 25,000 but less than 100,000	7%
Rural area, less than 2,500 population	7%

TABLE 24

SOURCES OF PUBLICITY ABOUT THE CHSPE

BELOW ARE SOME POSSIBLE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH STUDENTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE CHSPE. AT THE TIME OF THE DECEMBER, 1975, CHSPE, TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THESE USED? SINCE THAT TIME, HAS THERE BEEN AN INCREASE OR DECREASE IN USAGE?

		December, 1975				Trend since December, 1975		
	Source	Not used	Used infrequently	Used moderately	Used often	Decreased use	Basically unchanged	Increased use
a)	Public address system	71%	9%	14%	6%	12%	85%	3%
b)	Information posted on bulletin boards	7%	8%	28%	57%	3%	84%	13%
c)	School newspaper	40%	21%	30%	9%	9%	84%	7%
d)	The school's printed daily or weekly bulletin	33%	12%	24%	31%	7%	85%	8%
e)	Talks given in person by staff or faculty member in assembly or class	45%	22%	20%	13%	8%	82%	10%
f)	Notices sent home with all students	77%	12%	7%	4%	9%	88%	3%
g)	Counseling individual students to take the CHSPE	6%	18%	40%	36%	2%	75%	23%
h)	Local newspaper	42%	27%	24%	7%	9%	86%	5%
i)	Other	74%	4%	11%	11%	9%	84%	7%

sources of publicity in December, 1975, and the trend since then. What is most impressive is that the three highest percentages in the "used often" column occur for two passive (information posted on bulletin boards and the school's printed bulletin) sources and one highly selective (individual counseling) source of publicity. Probably one of the most effective (in the sense of getting the most information to the most students) types of publicity is the notice sent home with all students, something nearly 80 percent of the schools reported not using. Also interesting are the trends since December, 1975,--basically unchanged. The greatest increased type used occurred for individual counseling, although the nature of this counseling is unknown. The comparison of types of publicity between regular and continuation high schools is noteworthy. Continuation high schools used the more active methods of publicizing the CHSPE: faculty staff talks, which 38 percent used often, and individual counseling which 61 percent used often. Continuation high schools are of course generally smaller, more relaxed, more intimate institutions, in which it is somewhat easier to use the more active types of publicity.

Additional information about the CHSPE. Respondents were asked what other organizations they contacted for additional information about the CHSPE. District offices, other schools, community colleges, and organizations of school personnel were the most frequently selected. Shown in Table 25 are

TABLE 25

Organizations Contacted by School Personnel

INDICATE IF YOU HAVE OR HAVE NOT CONTACTED ANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS LISTED BELOW FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHSPE, SUCH AS THE ORGANIZATION'S POLICIES RELATING TO THE CHSPE.

	Organization	Percent who have contacted
a)	Your school district office	60%
b)	County Education Office	21
c)	State Department of Education	21
d)	Educational Testing Service (ETS)	31
e)	Other high school(s)	51
f)	University of California	20
g)	California State University or Colleges	28
h)	Community colleges	44
i)	Federal civil service	3
j)	California civil service	2
k)	Local (county, municipal) civil service	4
l)	Branches of the Armed Forces	42
m)	Private employers	18
n)	Trade unions	5
o)	Teacher organizations	11
p)	Organization of guidance counselors, school administrators, or attendance officers	44
q)	Other	3

the results for the various categories. The organizations with the most information about the CHSPE are the State Department of Education and Educational Testing Service; these were contacted only 21 percent and 31 percent, respectively. There was not much difference between regular and continuation high schools, although a higher percentage of regular high school respondents contacted the University of California, the California State University and colleges, and community colleges.

CHSPE related outcomes. School personnel were asked about a variety of outcomes related to the CHSPE, grouped under the generic category "CHSPE Related Outcomes." The idea was to obtain a rough estimate of the numbers of persons interested in some aspect of the program at the time of the December, 1975, CHSPE, and then to estimate the trend to the present time. The school level respondents perceived more below-average students interested in the CHSPE than bright students. On a four-point scale from none (1) to many (4), the mean response to bright students interested was 2.1, compared with a mean response of 2.6 for below-average students interested in the CHSPE. Continuation high schools report a higher number than regular high schools of brighter students interested in the CHSPE (mean of 2.1 for regular high schools, compared with 2.4 for continuation high schools). Moreover, continuation high schools report a slightly lower number than regular high schools of below-

average students interested in the CHSPE (mean of 2.8 for regular high schools, compared with 2.4 for continuation high schools). What is deceptive in this comparison is that the perception of who is bright or below-average almost certainly varies between regular and continuation high schools. The trend, however, is a crucial indicator independent of the fallability of the initial estimate. For both regular and continuation high schools, more than 70 percent report no change since December, 1975, in bright or below-average students interested in the CHSPE, although continuation schools as a whole do report a higher increase in the number of bright students interested in the CHSPE. Thus, while both regular and continuation high schools perceived greater numbers of below-average students rather than bright students interested in the CHSPE, continuation school officials reported a higher percentage of bright students interested in CHSPE.

Shown in Table 26 are the summary responses to the CHSPE outcomes. The trends do show that there is a sizeable increase in the number of students picking up CHSPE applications and in inquiries from students. Continuation high schools reported more interest than regular high schools did in terms of inquiries and student interest. Moreover, continuation high schools reported a higher percentage than regular high schools did of increase in the trends since December, 1975.

TABLE 26

School Related CHSPE Outcomes

BELOW ARE SOME CHSPE RELATED OUTCOMES WHICH MAY HAVE OCCURRED IN YOUR SCHOOL SINCE THE DECEMBER, 1975, CHSPE. PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU HAVE NOTICED AN INCREASING OR DECREASING TREND IN EACH OUTCOME.

	At the time of the December, 1975, exam					Trend since December, 1975		
	None (1)	Few (2)	Several (3)	Many (4)	Mean	Decrease	No change	Increase
a) Bright students interested in the CHSPE	19%	58%	21%	2%	2.1	16%	71%	14%
b) Below-average students interested in the CHSPE	9%	34%	43%	14%	2.6	11%	68%	21%
c) Students picking up CHSPE applications	8%	35%	42%	15%	2.6	14%	59%	27%
d) Students who have their application forms age-verified	17%	36%	32%	15%	2.4	10%	78%	12%
e) Inquiries from students	5%	33%	40%	22%	2.8	12%	60%	28%
f) Inquiries from teachers	24%	55%	17%	4%	2.0	13%	77%	10%
g) Inquiries from parents	20%	60%	17%	3%	2.0	10%	74%	16%

	At the time of the December, 1975, exam					Trend since December, 1975		
	None (1)	Few (2)	Several (3)	Many (4)	Mean	Decrease	No change	Increase
h) Inquiries from community agencies (for example, juvenile justice, employment or welfare services, employers)	56%	38%	5%	1%	1.5	7%	86%	7%
i) Other outcomes:	85%	9%	5%	1%	1.2	9%	85%	6%

Students who have passed the CHSPE and are staying in school. Examinees who have passed the CHSPE and elect to stay in school are of particular interest to school personnel, since it is these passers who have the greatest potential for causing alterations in the curriculum. In Section 3 of this report on "Examinee Characteristics," it was noted that those examinees who pass the CHSPE and remain in school are not asking for increased freedom within the school structure. On the school questionnaire, questions were asked to ascertain whether or not schools allow these students additional freedom. The answer, in short, is that the schools, in general, do not allow the CHSPE passers who remain in school any additional freedom from courses or hours attended. Continuation high schools are somewhat more flexible in their responses, particularly in allowing for case-by-case exceptions. Shown in Table 27 are the responses of the schools to questions on general course requirements and hours. The overwhelming response is not to allow freedom from any requirements. This attitude was strongly corroborated during the personal interview phase of this study, described in the following section.

Shown in Table 28 are the summary responses to a question concerning changes in selected actions of passers who remain in school. For the most part, school personnel reported no change on the listed variables for those CHSPE passers who remain in school. The one area where the greatest increase occurred was in the self-confidence of those who passed and

TABLE 27

School Policy for CHSPE Passers Who Remain in School

REGARDING STUDENTS WHO HAVE PASSED THE CHSPE AND ARE STAYING IN SCHOOL:

	Yes	No	Depends on the individual case
a) Passers are exempt from all required courses	12%	74%	14%
b) Passers are exempt from some required courses	4	80	16
c) Passers are allowed to attend school fewer hours	12	71	17
d) Passers are not required to accumulate the usual number of course hours for graduation	13	79	8
e) Passers are free from all requirements relating to courses, total course hours and attendance	11	81	8

TABLE 28

CHARCTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO PASS THE CHSPE AND REMAIN IN SCHOOL

AMONG STUDENTS WHO HAVE PASSED THE CHSPE AND ARE STAYING IN SCHOOL:

	To what extent have you noticed a change in the following:			Have you taken any action to deal with these outcomes?	
	Decrease	No Change	Increase	Yes	No
a) Signups for non-required courses?	2%	94%	4%	7%	93%
b) Signups for shorter or more flexible hours?	1%	88%	11%	9%	91%
c) Requests for curricular innovations or independent studies?	1%	93%	6%	7%	93%
d) Requests for exemptions from certain school rules?	1%	95%	4%	5%	95%
e) Studiousness?	3%	91%	6%	8%	92%
f) Absenteeism?	4%	86%	10%	12%	88%
g) Disruptiveness	4%	95%	1%	6%	94%
h) Apathy	6%	89%	5%	7%	93%
i) Self-confidence?	1%	81%	18%	8%	92%

remained. The schools apparently have not taken any action to deal with any of the listed outcomes, probably because so few reported any changes. These data are consistent with the data reported in Section 3 that the students themselves reported not varying their behavior in school. It seems clear the schools expect those who stay in school to behave as if they had not received a diploma equivalent and to conform to the usual rules and regulations. Furthermore, those who choose to stay in school accept, if not desire, their status as regular diploma-seeking students.

Students who have failed the CHSPE. One of the controversial aspects of the CHSPE program is that the schools are not told which of their students did not pass the CHSPE. The schools are provided with the number who were certified at their schools and the names of those who passed the CHSPE. Those whose names do not appear on the school pass list either failed the CHSPE or failed to show for the exam. Many school personnel have complained that they need to know the failers in order to provide counseling, which may include remediation. However, only one-third of the superintendents and principals interviewed (see Section 5) believed the schools should be provided with the names of failers; the remainder respected the right of privacy for those students who chose to take the CHSPE. In any case, the schools generally know informally who has failed the exam, since they know generally who signed-up, and they know who passed.

School respondents were asked to what extent they had noticed changes in some activities relating to those who failed the CHSPE. Shown in Table 29 are the summary results of these questions. Significant increases are noted in the areas of effort to get study help and requests for guidance. It is in these same areas where some action has been taken by school officials to deal with the increase. Not surprisingly, the self-confidence among the failers was perceived by nearly 20 percent of the school respondents to have decreased. There are systematic differences between regular and continuation high schools. In every category, the responses of continuation personnel included a higher percentage of responses at both the "increase" and "decrease" category, and fewer percentage responses in the "no change" category. It may be that continuation school staff members are more aware of failers' attitudes, given the smaller size and less structured environment prevalent in most continuation schools. Continuation school respondents also indicated in a greater proportion than regular high school respondents that they have taken action to deal with the various outcomes.

School curriculum. Many school people have expressed concern that the stress on functional literacy and basic applied skills, both characteristic of the contents of the CHSPE, may alter the nature of the curriculum. Indeed, if greater numbers of students elect to take the CHSPE and great numbers fail, then the schools are apparently not

TABLE 29

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE CHSPE AND REMAIN IN SCHOOL

AMONG STUDENTS WHO HAVE FAILED THE CHSPE:

	To what extent have you noticed a change in the following:			Have you taken any action to deal with these outcomes?	
	Decrease	NO Change	Increase	Yes	No
a) Studiousness?	6%	81%	13%	15%	85%
b) Absenteeism?	6%	81%	13%	17%	83%
c) Disruptiveness?	4%	93%	3%	8%	92%
d) Apathy?	8%	82%	10%	13%	87%
e) Self-confidence?	19%	78%	3%	18%	82%
f) Effort on their part to get study help for the next CHSPE	3%	66%	31%	25%	75%
g) Requests for guidance?	2%	63%	35%	28%	72%
h) Dropping out of school altogether	2%	93%	15%	17%	83%

providing the kind of instruction necessary to exceeding the CHSPE cut-off. However, great numbers (relatively speaking) are not taking the CHSPE, and many of those who do take it are not dissatisfied with the current school curriculum--leading to little coordinated pressure to modify the school curriculum. There are ways in which schools could prepare students for the CHSPE--the best way would be to offer a special class stressing 1) fundamental arithmetic operations at about an "eight grade" level, 2) literal comprehension of everyday materials such as newspapers, and 3) basic communicative writing skills.

In response to a question asking if the school had modified its curriculum as a result of the CHSPE, an impressive proportion (94 percent) reported that they had not modified their curriculum. This fact was verified in response to a similar question in the personal interview phase of this study. Continuation high school personnel reported a much higher percentage of curriculum modification--20 percent indicated they had modified their curriculum in some way. Some typical ways of modifying the curriculum are special classes, independent study, diagnostic testing, and special tutoring situations.

Only 10 percent of the regular high schools offer specific study help toward the CHSPE, while more than half (53 percent) the continuation schools offer study help. The particular types of study help offered are displayed in Table 30, along with a comparison between continuation high schools

TABLE 30

Specific Study Help Toward the CHSPE

DOES YOUR SCHOOL OFFER SPECIFIC STUDY HELP TOWARD THE CHSPE?

	Percent Responding YES	
	Regular High School	Continuation High School
	10%	53%

AMONG SCHOOLS THAT INDICATED THAT THEY DO OFFER SPECIFIC STUDY HELP:

		Percent Who Offer	
		Regular High School	Continuation High School
a)	A class for credit	17%	43%
b)	A class or workshop, not for credit	4%	22%
c)	A study kit	25%	50%
d)	Tutoring by students; granting credit to tutors	6%	19%
e)	Tutoring by students; not granting credit to tutors	11%	12%
f)	Teacher staying after school or during "free" hour and helping students practice for the CHSPE	29%	49%
g)	Diagnostic testing of individuals	31%	66%
h)	Other	41%	46%

and regular high schools. Diagnostic testing of individuals, study kits, teacher help, and classes for credit rate high among the specific study offerings, with continuation high schools involved in a greater proportion than regular high schools.

Attitude toward CHSPE. Questionnaire respondents were asked to characterize the general attitude of various individuals or groups toward the CHSPE. The summary results appear in Table 31. Guidance counselors and students are the two groups most favorable toward the CHSPE, followed closely by principals and superintendents. Continuation school personnel reported significantly higher percentages in the "favorable" category for all persons or groups. The percentages in the "favorable" column of Table 31 are considerably inflated in comparison to the results of the personal interviews, and the percentages in the "unfavorable" column are substantially lower than those obtained in the personal interview phase. One possible reason for this discrepancy is that the person who completed the mail survey knew the most about the CHSPE program and may have been more favorably impressed--perhaps his more positive attitude somewhat flavored his judgment with respect to others' opinions. It is enough to note that among those researchers who conducted the field interviews, no such pervasive positive attitudes were found (except among some continuation school personnel).

Some school conditions. The school representative was asked

TABLE 31

General Attitudes Toward the CHSPE

AMONG THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CONNECTED WITH YOUR SCHOOL, HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THEIR GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHSPE PROGRAM?

	Unfavorable (1)	Neutral (2)	Favorable (3)	Divided (4)
a) Principal	9%	32%	54%	4%
b) Guidance counselors	7%	23%	61%	9%
c) Students	1%	30%	56%	13%
d) Teachers	10%	34%	35%	21%
e) Parents	8%	33%	32%	27%
f) Local business community	10%	56%	16%	18%
g) Local school board	7%	42%	40%	11%
h) District superintendent	7%	38%	51%	4%

to what extent certain conditions have been altered in several areas over the last five years. The majority (81 percent) of the schools reported an increase in the variety of courses offered, with continuation high schools showing a greater increase. The emphasis on basic skills is manifest: Eighty-eight percent of the regular high schools and 77 percent of the continuation high schools reported an increase in such emphasis. The evidence gathered in the personal interviews substantiated these figures but also made clear that this increased interest in the basic skills is not a result of the CHSPE program. The range of alternative grading practices has not changed for most (60 percent) schools, with no differences in this regard between continuation high schools and regular high schools. School personnel were asked to indicate the variety of programs or courses offered in their school. Shown in Table 32 are the summary results for this question. The differences between the structure of continuation high schools and regular high schools is eminently evident on these variables. The high interest in remedial basic skills instruction and consumer education are positive indicators for potential CHSPE takers.

Average daily attendance (a.d.a.) losses. A decrease in a.d.a. caused by CHSPE passers who leave school and the resulting funding loss is clearly the salient disincentive from the schools' perspective. The financial impact, both

TABLE 32

Programs or Courses Operating in the Schools

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS OR COURSES ARE CURRENTLY OPERATING AT YOUR SCHOOL.

Category	Percent Selecting the Category	
	Regular High School	Continuation High School
College advanced placement	67%	19%
Self-paced learning	74%	99%
Diagnostic-prescriptive education	66%	85%
Student exhange program	71%	3%
Dropout prevention program	48%	82%
Bilingual program	54%	9%
Remedial basic skills instruction	99%	99%
Career exploration	96%	95%
Ethnic studies	51%	55%
Women's studies	24%	40%
Consumer education	93%	92%
Sociology, anthropology, or psychology courses	94%	78%

statewide and within districts, is explored in Section 6 of this report. The issue addressed on the questionnaire was to what extent the schools viewed the a.d.a. loss as a problem on a three-point scale ranging from "not a problem" (1), to a "serious problem" (3). The mean response for all schools was 1.3, with 73 percent indicating that loss of students and consequent a.d.a. loss is not viewed as a problem. The differences between continuation high schools and regular high schools is revealing: The mean for regular high schools is 1.4, with 67 percent indicating that a.d.a. loss was not a problem; the mean value for continuation high schools is 1.2, with 81 percent indicating that a.d.a. loss was not a problem. Results of the personal interviews with district administrators substantiates these findings--nearly 82 percent of the administrators interviewed believe that a.d.a. loss is not a problem. At the time of the December, 1975, CHSPE, however, only 50 percent reported believing that a.d.a. loss would be a serious problem. These figures are substantially more optimistic than reported by State Department of Education consultants who met with school administrators throughout the 1975-76 school year.

Continuation high schools may be less concerned than regular high schools about a.d.a. losses for two reasons. First, continuation schools are generally operating at full capacity with many more students desiring entrance than is allowed--the loss of a few students or even a significant number of

students could be regained rapidly. Second, continuation high schools in "equalization" districts are classified as "necessary small high schools" (Education Code § 41707) and, as such, have only to fall within a broad a.d.a. range to receive their revenue share. The loss of a few a.d.a. units would not be detrimental unless the difference dropped the school into another category.

To ferret out systematic differences among regular high schools, responses to the a.d.a. loss question were compared on numerous school characteristic variables. Shown in Table 33 are the mean responses for regular high schools of varying characteristics. Inferential statistical tests were not used, since, for all practical purposes, the entire population of schools was surveyed; thus differences in mean are "real," although possibly educationally insignificant. The higher the mean value, the more a.d.a. loss is perceived as a problem. The general trend for the socio-economic status (SES) indicators (housing, income, occupation) is that a.d.a. loss is generally perceived as less a problem for schools in the lower SES ranges. The greatest concern over loss of a.d.a. occurs for schools whose children's parents live in owner-occupied housing, have incomes in the high-middle range, and have occupations which are mostly white-collar. Furthermore, higher concern over a.d.a. loss occurs in the 5 to 9 percent tenth grade dropout range (only 17 percent of the schools are in that category) and the middle ranges of the percent eligible for free lunch.

TABLE 33

Perceptions of a.d.a. Losses for Regular High Schools of Differing Characteristics

Variable	Mean[a]	n
Percent Tenth Grade Dropouts		
0 - 4%	1.35	435
5 - 9%	1.41	145
10 - 14%	1.33	54
15 - 19%	1.23	22
20 - 24%	1.43	23
25 - 29%	1.10	10
30 - 34%	1.4	5
35 - 39%	1.0	2
40 - or more	1.4	5
Percent Eligible for Free Lunch		
0 - 9%	1.36	296
10 - 19%	1.41	183
20 - 29%	1.37	99
30 - 39%	1.43	47
40 - 49%	1.29	31
50 - or more	1.13	55
Percent Absences		
Less than 5%	1.37	84
6 - 10%	1.39	426
11 - 15%	1.33	156
16 - 20%	1.27	41
21 - 30%	1.13	16

a) Mean responses are computed on the scale (1) not a problem (2) somewhat of a problem (3) serious problem for the statement "Loss of students and consequent ADA loss"

Variable	Mean	n
Housing in Schools' Area		
Owner Occupied	1.43	97
Some Rental	1.33	440
Evenly Mixed	1.41	169
Mostly Rental	1.17	24
All Rental	2.0	2
Estimate of Average Income Level		
High Income	1.18	11
High - Middle	1.41	118
Middle	1.40	236
Low - Middle	1.34	286
Low	1.22	54
Parental Occupation		
Professional	1.38	34
Mostly White Collar	1.44	130
Evenly Mixed	1.38	203
Mostly Blue Collar	1.33	284
All Blue Collar	1.29	72

Caution should be exercised in the interpretation of these differences--they are not large differences, and all the means are closer to the "not a problem" category than the "somewhat of a problem" category.

School personnel were also asked whether, aside from a.d.a. loss, loss of bright students and loss of students who need to be in school is a problem. With respect to bright students, the great majority (87 percent) responded that the loss of these students is not a problem, presumably because great numbers of bright students are not taking the CHSPE and of those who do and pass, many remain in school. Fewer (73 percent) perceived the loss of students who need to be in school as "not a problem." In fact, 23 percent reported they viewed the loss of students who need to be in school as "somewhat of a problem." It is a pervasive theme stated repeatedly throughout the personal interviews that school is the best place for most individuals under the age of 18: The school environment allows for optimum socialization, learning opportunities, and ideal conditions for individual growth. School administrators expressed the belief that students should not be released from schools, particularly those students on the fringes of the school environment (not the recalcitrants). No differences on these issues were detected between continuation high schools and regular high schools.

School survey. The following are the major findings from the school survey component:

- Most of the publicity about the CHSPE in the schools consisted of posting the CHSPE Information Bulletin. More aggressive means of publicizing (e.g., loudspeaker announcements, talks given in class) were used sparingly.
- School personnel reported more "below average" than "bright" students interested in the CHSPE.
- School personnel, in general, did not allow any relaxation of requirements for those who passed the CHSPE and remained in school.
- Nearly one-fifth of those school personnel who responded detected an increase in self-confidence among students who passed the CHSPE and remained in school.
- Two-thirds of the school personnel supported the policy of not releasing the names of non-passers.
- One-third of the survey respondents reported an increase in requests for study help and requests for guidance among those who did not pass the CHSPE.
- Nearly all (94 percent) school personnel reported that their schools had not modified their curricula as a result of the CHSPE program.
- Questionnaire respondents reported that among various groups in the school, guidance counselors and students were the most favorable toward the CHSPE.

- Three-fourths of the school personnel respondents indicated that loss of CHSPE passers and subsequent revenue losses were not viewed as a problem in their schools.
- Continuation high school respondents were generally more positive, more flexible in their attitude toward examinees, more willing to provide instructional opportunities for potential examinees, and less concerned about losses of per-student state aid than regular high school respondees.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

District and school personnel interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of April, 1977, in an attempt to elicit responses not easily obtainable on a mail questionnaire and to obtain information directly from high-level administrators. A sample of 30 district superintendents and 30 high school principals made up the interview target group. Unlike that of the mailed questionnaire to schools, the salient purpose was to contact the individual who was the spokesperson for district or school policy. The attitudes of these top administrators toward the CHSPE program are crucial in assessing the secondary school impact of the CHSPE.

The Instrument

A structured interview instrument was constructed to obtain both fact and opinion from the interviewees. Questions were generated from screenings of the initial responses from the school questionnaires, as well as from considerations of district/school policy. The result was a 33-question structured interview schedule (Appendix VIII), with most responses pre-coded and comments solicited on each question.

Training

Five interviewers were trained in a one week in-service

workshop. The training included actual interviewing experiences with the instrument at selected local field test sites. In addition, interviewers were provided with a comprehensive folder of materials (Appendix IX, describing the CHSPE program; however, the interviewers were instructed not to function as an information resource (most questions were directed to the State Department of Education), since only approximately one hour was allocated to conduct each interview. The interviewers were instructed to address all questions to the district superintendent, the high school principal, or their designated representatives. When more than one district/school representative was present during the interview (as was often the case), it became more difficult to direct attention toward the top administrator, since, for the most part, his subordinates were more knowledgeable about the CHSPE. The head administrator's opinion was solicited; if he deferred to subordinates, this fact was noted. Shown in Table 34 is the distribution by position of those interviewed and others present.

Sample District and Schools

There are 254 unified and 115 high school districts in California, supporting 719 high schools and 311 continuation schools.[1] With a sample of 30 districts and 30 schools, generalizations should be made with caution. Since the major policy considerations revolve around the district,

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1. October Report 1975-76. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1976.

DISTRIBUTION OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL INTERVIEWEES
BY TITLE

	SCHOOL INTERVIEWS	DISTRICT INTERVIEWS
INTERVIEWEE	26 Principals 3 Vice-principals 1 Director of Pupil Services	16 Superintendents 6 Assistant Superintendents 1 Principal 1 Deputy Superintendent 1 Coordinator of Secondary Education 1 Counselor 1 Coordinator of Curriculum and Research 1 Coordinator of Instruction 1 Director of Student Personnel 1 Consultant - Group Testing and Evaluation
OTHERS PRESENT	1 Guidance Counselor 1 Head Counselor 3 Vice-principals 1 School psychologist 1 Attendance Supervisor 1 Shop Counselor	2 Assistant Superintendents 2 Principals 1 Chairman, Education Standards Committee 1 Coordinator 1 Consultant 1 Head of Services and District Education 1 Administrator of Instruction and Student Services 1 Counseling Director 1 Director of Research 2 Pupil Personnel Directors 1 Director of Curriculum 1 Director of Career Education 1 Coordinator of Special Education

the sampling unit was chosen to be the district, with two schools (regular and continuation) selected within half the districts. Another cogent reason for selecting the district as the first-stage sampling unit was the availability of stratifying variables collected by the California Assessment Program (CAP). While school-level twelfth grade data are collected for CAP analysis, continuation high school students are not assessed, effectively ruling out the high school as a primary sampling unit.

Districts were stratified on four variables, resulting in 54 cells from which to sample the 30 districts. This sampling framework is displayed in Figure 4. Definitions of the stratifying variables are as follows:

District type.[1] Districts were typed as either unified or high school in order to expose any systematic policy differences with respect to the CHSPE program.

District size.[2] District size, classified as high, medium, or low, was based on the number of students tested in the twelfth grade CAP. The classifications were as follows:

Large : 3,500 students or more
Medium: between 501 and 3,499 students
Small : fewer than 501 students

Shown in Table 35 is the 1973 distribution of schools by size (number of students tested) of district and by size

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1. The cource for this variable is the 1977 California Public School directory. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1977.
2. The source for district size is the 1975-76 California Assessment Program data file.

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

URBAN

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	1	0	0
M	0	1(1)*	0
L	0	0	0

SUBURBAN

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	0	10(1)*	28(1)*
M	1(1)*	18(1)*	21
L	3(3)*	11(1)	16

RURAL

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	0	0	2
M	0	0	1
L	0	1(1)	0

UNIFIED DISTRICTS

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	5(5)*	1(1)*	0
M	0	3	0
L	0	0	0

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	0	22(2)*	54(2)
M	0	29(2)*	45(2)
L	1(1)*	35(2)	54(2)

% AFDC \ SIZE	L	M	S
H	0	1(1)	3
M	0	0	0
L	0	0	2

Figure 4

DISTRIBUTION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS[1]

1. Entries are number of school districts within a given cell. Number of sample districts are enclosed in parentheses. Cells where schools were sampled are indicated by an asterisk.*

.BLE 35

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS BY SIZE OF DISTRICT AND SIZE OF SCHOOL, 1973*

| School Number of Students Tested | District Number of Students Tested | | |

of school. As district size increases, school size also increases, so that the large districts account for most of the students in rather large schools. Thus in terms of a sample representing the greatest number of students, the emphasis should be on the medium or large districts. However, the sample should also accurately reflect the views of the smaller districts.

AFDC.[1] The percent Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was trichotomized from the statewide percentile distribution into high, medium, or low as follows:

	State Percentile Ranks	Percent AFDC
High :	67 - 100	over 10%
Medium:	34 - 66	4.8% - 9.9%
Low :	33 - 0	4.7% or below

Early in 1976 each district completed a questionnaire asking for the enrollment of each school in the district and the number of students in the school whose families were receiving AFDC assistance. For each twelfth grade school, the number of students was divided by the school enrollment to yield a percent AFDC figure. The district AFDC value was calculated by weighting the percent AFDC figure for each high school by the number of twelfth grade students tested in the school. The district figures were then ranked and percentiles computed.

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1. The source for percent AFDC is the 1975-76 California Assessment Program data file.

District location.[1] District location was classified as rural, urban, or suburban based on the following index of school location:

Urban : City of more than 300,000 population

Suburban: City of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000:

1. Usually characterized as by itself, not as being near or part of a more populated area
2. Located near a city of more than 300,000

Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) of more than 25,000 but less than 100,000:

1. Usually characterized as by itself, not as being near or part of a more populated area
2. Located near a city of more than 300,000
3. Located near a city of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000

Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) of 2,500 - 25,000:

1. Usually characterized as by itself, not as being near or part of a more populated area
2. Located near a city of more than 300,000

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1. The source for this variable is the 1974-75 California Assessment Program data file.

3. Located near a city of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000
4. Located near a city or town of more than 25,000 but less than 100,000

Rural: Rural area; less than 2,500 population:

1. Usually characterized as by itself, not as being near or part of a more populated area
2. Located near a city of more than 300,000
3. Located near a city or town of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000
4. Located near a city or town of more than 25,000 but less than 100,000
5. Located near a city or town of more than 2,500 but less than 25,000

A district was assigned the modal classification of the schools within the district reporting location on the twelfth grade CAP test.

The sampling framework was composed of 2 x 3 x 3 x 3 = 54 cells and is depicted in Figure 4. The number of districts selected (30) is indicated by parentheses within sample cells. An asterisk indicates schools were selected within that particular cell.

While it is true the number of sampled districts is small in comparison to the total number of districts (about an 8 percent sample), the selected districts contain a twelfth-grade population representing 35 percent of the statewide

total. Shown in Table 36 is the twelfth-grade enrollment (raw and as a percentage of total twelfth-grade enrollment) for the sample districts. The "weighting" in the sample selection in favor of high twelfth-grade enrollment districts allows for a balancing of district representativeness and student representation in a sample of only 30 districts.

Two high schools, a regular and continuation high school, were selected from each of half the sample districts. These 15 districts were selected to include as many cells as possible (see Figure 4) but "weighted" toward the large and medium sized districts. The sample districts and schools are listed in Table 37.

An additional index, the CHSPE utilization index, was computed for schools and districts. The index is an indicator of the relative number of students who took the CHSPE in a given school.[1] The index was computed for a school by summing the number of CHSPE examinees over the first three administrations and dividing by twelfth-grade enrollment. District utilization was computed similarly. The index was then dichotomized into a high and low classification.

A continuation high school and regular high school were chosen in each of the 15 sample districts, with the schools within districts matched on the CHSPE utilization index.

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1. The number is the sum of those who registered in a given school presumably a close approximation to those actually residing in the school's area.

TABLE 36

Twelfth-grade Enrollment for Sample Districts[1]

	Enrollment Twelfth-grade	Percentage of Total
Long Beach Unified School District	3,929	1.37
Los Angeles Unified School District	35,787	12.51
San Diego City Unified School District	7,865	2.75
San Francisco Unified School District	4,936	1.72
Oakland Unified School District	3,125	1.09
San Jose Unified School District	2,379	.83
San Bernardino Unified School District	2,033	.71
Pasadena Unified School District	1,673	.58
Mendocino Unified School District	41	.01
Washington Unified School District	302	.11
Newark Unified School District	549	.19
ABC Unified School District	1,425	.50
Kelseyville Unified School District	50	.02
Benicia Unified School District	181	.06
San Juan Unified School District	3,963	1.39

1. From the October Report 1975-76, California State Department of Education, Sacramento.

	Enrollment Twelfth-grade	Percentage of Total
San Ramon Valley Unified School District	895	.31
Conejo Valley Unified School District	1,263	.44
Oro Madre Unified School District	132	.05
Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District	197	.07
Montebellow Unified School District	1,420	.50
Campbell Union High School District	3,259	1.14
Oxnard Union High School District	2,261	.79
Red Bluff Union High School District	368	.13
Kern Union High School District	3,626	1.27
Anaheim Union High School District	5,233	1.83
Huntington Beach Union High School District	4,270	1.49
San Mateo Union High School District	2,691	.94
Tamalpais Union High School District	1,316	.46
San Dieguito Union High School District	790	.28
Grossmont Union High School District	4,389	1.53
TOTAL	100,368	35.07
STATEWIDE TOTAL	285,868	35.10

TABLE 37

SAMPLE DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

DISTRICT		SCHOOLS	TYPE
LONG BEACH UNIFIED	1.	Polytechnic Senior High	C
	2.	Lakewood Senior High	R
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED	3.	Aliso Continuation	C
	4.	Bell Senior High	R
SAN DIEGO CITY	5.	Midway Jr - Sr High School	C
	6.	Point Loma Senior High	R
SAN FRANCISCO	7.	John A. O'Connell Voc High	V
	8.	J. Eugene McAteer High	R
OAKLAND	9.	Dewey Continuation High	C
	10.	Castlemont Senior High	R
ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	11.	Tracy Education Center	C
	12.	Gahr High School	R
SAN JOSE UNIFIED	13.	Edison High School	C
	14.	Pioneer High School	R
PASADENA UNIFIED	15.	Foothill High School	C
	16.	Blair High School	R
SAN JUAN UNIFIED	17.	La Entrada Continuation	C
	18.	Del Campo High School	R

DISTRICT	SCHOOLS	TYPE
CAMPBELL UNION HIGH SCHOOL	19. Williams High School	C
	20. Blackford High School	R
OXNARD UNION HIGH SCHOOL	21. Frontier High School	C
	22. Channel Islands High School	R
RED BLUFF	23. Salisbury High School	C
	24. Red Bluff High School	R
ANAHEIM UNION HIGH SCHOOL	25. Gilbert High School	C
	26. Savanna High School	R
KERN UNION HIGH SCHOOL	27. Arvin Continuation High School	C
	28. North High School	R
GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL	29. Chaparral High School	C
	30. El Cajon Valley High	R

Matches were not always possible due to the limited selection of continuation high schools (most districts have only one). Where there was a choice of schools, random selection procedures were used. Shown in Figure 5 is the distribution of high schools within the selected districts.

Interview Results

Overview. In general, district superintendents and school principals view the CHSPE as an alternative for those students who are unable to adapt to the school environment. There is, howver, strong sentiment that the schools serve their constituency (those under 18) by contributing in a substantially positive way to the individuals' basic skills, learning, and socialization. Moreover, each district and school develops its curriculum organization and structure in ways congruent with local needs and demands. Not surprisingly, the CHSPE is viewed as antithetical to local desires, a product of a coalition of legislators and the State Department of Education.

The CHSPE itself (as opposed to the program) raises the ire of many school officials: Few have knowledge of pass/fail criteria, and many disagree with the almost exclusive stress on functional literacy and applied problem solving items. Most believe that a passing score on the State Department of Education-developed CHSPE is in no way comparible to a regular locally awarded diploma. Maturation, socialization, and peer interaction are most often cited as the positive

HIGH SCHOOLS

		REGULAR			CONTINUATION		
		CHSPE UTILIZATION INDEX			CHSPE UTILIZATION INDEX		
			H	L		H	L
U		1.	X			X	
N		2.	X			X	
I		3.	X			X	
F		4.		X		X	
I		5.		X			X
E		6.	X			X	
D		7.		X			X
		8.		X		X	
		9.		X		X	
H	S	1.		X			X
I	C	2.		X			X
G	H	3.		X			X
H	O	4.	X			X	
	O	5.		X		X	
	L	6.	X			X	

Figure 5

Distribution of 30 Sample High Schools by District Type, High School Type and CHSPE Utilization Index

benefits of high school which are not tested. Further, the districts themselves are moving in the direction of upgrading their diplomas by requiring demonstrated competency from students (as required by AB 3408) who are awarded a local diploma; and while these competencies are "minimal," they are eminently representative of local desires.

An almost insouciant attitude is exhibited by the top administrators: Nearly without exception, district and school leaders believe that the impact of the CHSPE program on the schools is minimal. The loss of a.d.a. and subsequent loss of revenue is not perceived as a problem, since so few students elect to take the CHSPE. Curriculum adjustments are non-existent, although counselors are kept somewhat busier advising prospective CHSPE examinees.

Only one district superintendent (of a large urban district) indicated dismay at the financial disincentives. His message: Remove the revenue losses stemming from examinees who leave school, and I change my district's attitude toward the CHSPE. His particular concern is the number of mid-year graduates who, along with the losses from CHSPE, create a considerable revenue decrease. It is probable that the impact of the CHSPE occurs in these marginal situations where mid-year graduate losses and declining enrollment losses combine.

Questionnaire results. The CHSPE Announcement is sent to all districts and high school sites. When asked if the

administrator had seen the Announcement, 95 percent indicated they had. The CHSPE Information Bulletin includes a more thorough explanation of the CHSPE program and also contains sample questions. Most (88 percent) of the superintendents and principals (80/97 percents) indicated that they were aware of and had read the Information Bulletin. Several interviewees discussed their opinions of the CHSPE sample questions, and the majority believed the questions were too easy and misleading. Those who commented were told by examinees that the questions found in the Information Bulletin were not representative of the items on the CHSPE. Administrators reported that, in general, the Announcement and Information Bulletin were accessible to students through the counseling office, bulletin boards in the building, and through information passed on by various staff persons. There was no specific standard procedure followed by schools or districts in publicizing the CHSPE. There seemed to be little organized effort on the part of the districts and schools in providing preliminary information pertinent to the CHSPE. Many (65 percent) believed the State Department of Education had provided sufficient information about the CHSPE. Comments from those individuals who did not feel the Department provided sufficient information varied greatly and were quite specific; however, questions on norming and scoring were common.

When asked if they had seen the exam, almost all (90 percent) reported never having seen the exam, although they

expressed a strong desire to peruse it. Some of the other staff members present during the interviews indicated they had seen copies of the exam while working as proctors during one of the administrations. When asked their opinion of the CHSPE from what they knew of the exam, responses varied, but most did not feel qualified to answer. When asked if they felt the exam was too easy, 43 percent said "no" and 33 percent were undecided. Presumably this response was a result of their knowledge of students who passed and did not pass the exam. The percent of administrators who felt the exam was too easy was smaller (23 percent), yet this group was far more vocal and articulate in expressing their concerns and opinions. They were very concerned that the exam is too easy and the certificate awarded to those who pass it should not be equivalent to a high school diploma. A related concern emerged after interviewers described the concept of "survival skills" and asked if the exam should place emphasis on questions dealing with these kinds of daily living problems: Seventy-two percent said yes, 17 percent were undecided, and 12 percent said no. Generally, the individuals who felt the exam was too easy felt the stress on "survival skills" was not desirable. These individuals had doubts about the State Department of Education defining what constitutes a high school education vis-a-vis the CHSPE. Many had strong academic leanings and viewed the "survival skills" emphasis as being in fundamental conflict with their concept of a high school education. In general,

those individuals who were in favor of emphasizing "survival skills" felt that the CHSPE was designed for the high school dropout rathern than the college-bound student.

Even though several individuals disagreed with the term and concept of practical "survival skills," 82 percent of the interviewees felt there was a trend toward increased emphasis on consumer education; few, however, (8 percent) felt that this increased emphasis was a result of or grew out of concern over the emphasis on practical skills on the CHSPE. Many attributed the increased emphasis on consumer education to enterprising staff members rather than any district policy or curriculum decision. Those few who did feel the CHSPE contributed to the increase in education believed the CHSPE to be one of several movements in modern education influencing the secondary curriculum.

The State Department of Education releases only the names of examinees who pass the CHSPE. When asked if the names of non-passers should also be released, responses were divided in their answers and many gave the same rationale for conflicting responses. Among the 37 percent over who responded "yes," most wanted these students to be identified so they could receive counseling and possibly remediation. Their desire to know the identity of students was not to single them out as failures but to help them become successful. Given the drop in failers' self-concepts, this concern is certainly valid--as far as it goes. Those (57 percent) who felt that the student should <u>not</u> be identified were

speaking from a humanistic standpoint and believed it was the individuals' choice to take the CHSPE and his right of privacy should be respected: Singling out the non-passers would probably contribute to the examinees' sense of failure. So for both "yes" and "no" responses, individuals were considering the students' self-esteem. Only 7 percent were undecided on the issue of whether or not to release non-passers' names. The comparison between superintendents and principals in this regard is revealing, in that half the principals indicated they wanted the names of non-passers released, while fewer than one-quarter of the superintendents desired the names of non-passers.

Respondents were asked to characterize the attitude of various individuals or groups in the school community. The responses are summarized in Table 38 The six choices of responses were unfavorable, neutral, favorable, divided, or unknown. Slightly more than half (56 percent) the respondees reported school guidance counselors were favorable toward the CHSPE: Counselors viewed it as a realistic option for students, especially those students who are disenchanted with high school or unable successfully to cope with the constraints of high school. Counselors actively recommended the CHSPE to individuals they believed could profit from the potential options stemming from it, but the information was selectively given to some students who made the initial contact.

Interviewees felt that teachers knew very little and had

TABLE 38

Interviewee Characterization of Attitudes Toward the CHSPE

	Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	Divided	Unknown
Guidance Counselor	12%	14%	56%	18%	0%
Teachers	18%	22%	20%	27%	13%
Students	2%	19%	49%	22%	8%
Parents	10%	20%	17%	28%	25%
School Board	17%	20%	23%	17%	23%
Principals	24%	13%	34%	24%	5%
Superintendents Whom You Know	17%	8%	38%	12%	25%
Yourself	17%	7%	58%	17%	1%
Business Community	14%	2%	7%	5%	72%

few strong opinions about the CHSPE. The response category with the highest percentage (27 percent) was the "divided" category. Interviewees rated students as favorable (49 percent) toward the CHSPE, although interviewees expressed the opinion that many students were unaware of the CHSPE. The fact that nearly half the interviewees characterized student attitude as positive may reflect the response bias of describing only those students who know of the CHSPE.

Interviewees selected the divided category with highest frequency (28 percent) to characterize the attitude of parents toward the CHSPE. Most parents are probably unaware of the CHSPE, and the interviewee responses refer only to those parents who were aware of the CHSPE program.

When asked about the school boards' attitudes, interviewees responded to the six choices in a rather uniform distribution. More than likely the interviewees know very little about the boards' attitudes, since there was nearly no evidence of formal board action.

Superintendents characterized the attitude of principals as mostly neutral (27 percent) or favorable (30 percent). On the other hand, principals rated their peer group as more than one-third favorable (37 percent), 30 percent unfavorable, and 27 percent divided. No principal felt that any principal was neutral toward the exam. Principals felt that 37 percent of their superintendents were favorable, while 40 percent of superintendents believed that superintendents are favorable. Both a majority of superintendents

(53 percent) and of principals (63 percent) rated themselves as being favorable. Those who selected the favorable category indicated they favor the additional option provided the student.

Both principals and superintendents or their designees were reluctant to make a definite statement about the attitude of business or four-year colleges and universities. Nearly three-quarters of the interviewees characterized the attitudes as unknown. The least was known about the business community, their attitudes, and whether or not they would accept the CHSPE on an equal basis with a local diploma. This finding reflects the minimal impact of CHSPE certificate holders in the labor market, at least insofar as the labor market attitude is reflected in the schools. There was not any clear subjective consensus as to whether four-year colleges and universities would accept the CHSPE on an equal basis with the local diploma.

In the second school year of CHSPE operations, the test was administered three times. In general, administrators agreed (55 percent) with this frequency and with the November, March, and June timetable.

When asked if they felt compulsory education laws requiring attendance until the age of 18 or high school graduation were reasonable, 47 percent felt they are not reasonable and 42 percent believed they are. More than one-third (37 percent) of the superintendents favored lowering the compulsory attendance age, while 53 percent of the principals felt

the age should be lowered. Most who favored lowering the compulsory attendance age believed the schools were attractive enough to retain most students.

Administrators reported the types of students who took the CHSPE were dropouts or students who wanted to get out of high school. Several bright students took the CHSPE in order to leave school early (to attend college) or as a challenge to see how they would do. Interviewees reported most bright students who pass the CHSPE opt to stay in high school and that the types of students taking the CHSPE have not changed significantly.

Most (80 percent) of both the superintendents and principals believed the "bright but bored" student should take the exam. Three-quarters felt students who were having difficulty adapting to school should take the exam, and 88 percent believed high school dropouts should take the exam.

Most superintendents (87 percent) and principals (70 percent) did not know of anyone who was prevented from taking the exam because they could not afford the registration fee. Administrators felt the $10 fee was a reasonable amount to charge and expressed a hope the cost would not increase. However, if the fee were raised to $15, the majority of administrators (58 percent) did not believe this increase would inhibit students from taking the exam.

Two questions were asked in an attempt to relate the acceptance of CHSPE passers with those who receive a local diploma. The questions did not ask whether or not the

for certification. Most administrators (63 percent) required students to talk with a counselor or administrator to obtain certification. The principals were more knowledgeable about CHSPE logistics and site practices. When asked if a record was kept of person who obtained age certification, 43 percent of superintendents indicated "yes," 30 percent indicated "no," and 26 percent indicated "other." Most (77 percent) principals said "yes"; 23 percent said "no." Both administrative groups were somewhat divided on the subject of follow-up. Some (40 percent) of the superintendents indicated "yes," while 33 percent said "no"; 53 percent of the principals indicated "yes" and 40 percent indicated "no." The administrator group definitions of what constitutes a follow-up varied greatly but most referred to questionnaire surveys administered at the time of the exam.

In the majority (77 percent) of cases, course requirements were not suspended for those students who passed the CHSPE and remained in school. Most (83 percent) of the interviewees stated that students who passed the CHSPE did not ask to be relieved of any course requirements. None of the administrators said the district would award a local diploma to students who passed the CHSPE but who did not complete local graduation requirement. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of the interviewees indicated such students were not allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies, and 78 percent of those interviewed stated they gave no special recognition to students who passed the CHSPE. Obviously,

the schools are not actively providing for any embellishments of the CHSPE certificate. Certificate holders are typically not recognized as having obtained any special status--they are in fact generally ignored. However, a few schools reported sending a congratulatory letter to passers. When asked if they knew of any students who dropped out of school before they received their test results, 23 percent of the superintendents and 60 percent of the principals said "yes."

The majority (85 percent) of both groups of administrators agreed there had been few if any requests to change curriculum to meet the needs of students who passed the CHSPE and remained in school. Nearly all (93 percent) said there had been no requests for changes in the curriculum to meet the needs of those who did not pass the CHSPE.

Very few services were offered to those students who did not pass the CHSPE. Most (75 percent) interviewees stated they did not provide for any counseling or instructional remediation for students who fail the CHSPE. Slightly more (77 percent) of the administrators indicated they did not provide any instructions geared specifically toward items like those on the CHSPE. In general, districts do not provide much positive incentive or instructional help for students interested in passing the CHSPE.

Districts overwhelmingly reported a negligible decline in a.d.a. as a result of students leaving school after passing the CHSPE. Prior to the first CHSPE administration in

December, 1975, 51 percent of the school or district personnel thought loss of a.d.a. might be a potential problem. As many as 42 percent did not perceive the potential a.d.a. loss as a problem in December, 1975. An impressive 82 percent of the administrators believed a.d.a. loss is not a current concern or problem. Among the 12 percent who reported concern about a.d.a. loss, 52 percent said there was no general district policy to deal with the problem, and 42 percent did not know of any policy. Only 17 percent reported their approach to the CHSPE would be different if loss of a.d.a. didn't exist as a potential problem. Nearly 60 percent felt they could not clearly assess the possible outcomes if the loss of a.d.a. did not exist as a problem.

Senate Bill 220 of 1975 permits districts to lessen by 75 percent the revenue losses which occur when enrollment declines by more than 1 percent in a year. None of the districts reported considering this marginal savings when ruminating over the possible revenue losses from students who leave school because they pass the CHSPE. Nearly 40 percent of the districts indicated their finance personnel would consider these provisions if a.d.a. loss were substantial.

In general, administrators felt high school is a worthwhile learning and maturing experience and that more students do not take the CHSPE because they are content to stay in school with their peers until graduation. Also, most parents want their children in school until graduation.

Most (77 percent) of the individuals interviewed did not believe the CHSPE would be a major influence in their districts or schools in the next few years. Nearly all (92 percent) the administrators did not plan to publicize the CHSPE any differently from the way they are currently. The majority (87 percent) indicated there was no noticeable impact on their districts or schools as a result of the CHSPE program.

Many (63 percent) of the principals felt their superintendents had been supportive regarding their approach to the CHSPE. The majority (78 percent) of respondents reported there were no written policies available relating to the CHSPE; of the 15 percent who indicated they did have policies in writing, most such policies were subsumed under broader school policies. The interview team collected very few written policy materials specifically directed toward the CHSPE.

High/low utilization. High and low utilization districts and schools were examined for significant differences on responses to the interview questions. Statistically significant differences[1] ($p \leq .10$) were found between high and low utilization districts in the following areas:

- Most (78 percent) administrators from high utilization districts supported the policy of not releasing the names of non-passers, whereas only 50

1. The Chi Square statistic was computed for contigency tables with high/low utilization as the row and the other variables as the column of the contigency table.

percent of the administrators from low-utlization districts supported the policy.

- More than half (57 percent) the administrators from high-utilization districts believed raising the CHSPE fee to $15 would keep many additional students from taking the exam; only 29 percent of those from low-utilization districts believed the $15 would hinder many students.
- Half the high-utilization districts in the sample are in the lower third of districts on the statewide percent AFDC scale, compared with only 19 percent of the high-utilization districts. Nearly 70 percent of the low-utilization districts are in the upper third of the percent AFDC scale, compared with 30 percent of the high-utilization districts.

Statistically significant differences between high and low utilization schools were found in the following areas:

- In high-utilization schools more than 80 percent of the interviewees reported those who passed the CHSPE were as qualified to enter the labor market as those who received a regular diploma. Only 15 percent of those interviewed in low-utilization schools believed the same.
- Most administrators (88 percent) from high-utilization schools reported the types of students taking the CHSPE have not changed since the December, 1975, CHSPE. This finding compares with only 54 percent of the administrators from low-utilization districts reporting no change.

- All administrators from high-utilization schools reported the CHSPE is a good idea for dropouts, compared with 77 percent of administrators from low-utilization schools so stating.
- More than one-third (35 percent) of administratoss from high-utilization schools provide counseling or instructional remediation for students who have failed the CHSPE; only 8 percent reported providing this service in low-utilization schools.
- None of the administrators from low-utilization schools indicated changes would occur in their schools as a result of the CHSPE program; however, one-fourth the administrators from high-utilization schools indicated some change as a result of the CHSPE program.

The results of the high/low utilization analyses do not point clearly to those factors which discriminate between the two types of districts or schools. These few variables in which statistical significance was found emerged from a set of 66 variables: It is somewhat surprising that so few statistically significant relationships were found, given that more were expected by chance alone. In view of this underwhelming statistical evidence of significant relationships (which may be the result of insensitive measures, crudely defined utilization index, or both), attempts to explain systematic differences between high and low utilization districts/schools reduce to speculative fancy. It

does appear (subjectively), however, that in districts/ schools where the ambience is facilitative, student centered, decentralized, and replete with open communication, the CHSPE is likely to function as a non-trivial program, serving both the schools and students.

District and school interview. The following are the results of personal interviews with 60 administrators:

- Top administrators perceived the CHSPE as generally antithetical to local desires: Administrators have no control over who takes the test nor do they control the content of the exam.
- The sample of district superintendents and school principals typically viewed the CHSPE as an alternative for those students who were unable to adapt to the school environment--they were less enthusiastic about their "brighter" students opting to take the CHSPE.
- The administrators did not place the state-issued CHSPE Certificate of Proficiency on a par with their local diplomas. However, nearly half indicated they believed individuals who passed the CHSPE were as qualified to enter the labor market as those who were awarded a local diploma.
- Nearly all the top administrators reported that loss of state aid, as a result of CHSPE passers leaving early, was negligible. This finding represents

a significant change in attitude since December, 1975: More than half the respondees recalled that in December, 1975, they believed revenue losses resulting from CHSPE early leavers would be a problem.

- Nearly three-fourths of those interviewed agreed the CHSPE should place emphasis on problems dealing with daily living.
- Most of the interviewees did not believe the CHSPE would be a major influence in their districts or schools in the next few years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The structure of public school finance in California, involving both state and local funds raised and expended pursuant to state law, is quite complex. A detailed examination of the effects of the CHSPE program on the income and expenditure of local schools is accordingly beyond the scope of this report. The finances of the CHSPE program itself can be outlined for the period covered in this report, however, as can the program's approximate effect on state apportionments of education moneys to local school districts.

In the fiscal year 1975-76, which included the December, 1975, and March, 1976, administrations of the CHSPE, as well as the exam development and administration activities incidental thereto carried out between July 1, 1975, and June 30, 1976, all State Department of Education overhead costs (chiefly salaries and benefits) allocable to the CHSPE program totaled $315,350. Pursuant to the terms of their contract with the Department of Education, Educational Testing Service's billings to the Department for the products and services they supplied to the CHSPE program totaled $205,513. Total combined CHSPE costs to the State Treasury in fiscal year 1975-76 thus amounted to $315,350. Net application fee receipts for the December, 1975, and March, 1977, exams (after deducting refunds) totaled $316,940.

Thus total CHSPE program income exceeded total program costs for the 1975-76 fiscal year by $1,590, which reverts to the state treasury's General Fund. The state's taxpayers, in other words, realized a slight net profit from the CHSPE program's first year of operation.

Much more significant are the savings in apportionments of education funds to local school districts resulting from students who passed the CHSPE leaving school before they otherwise would have.

The schools report that, overall, approximately 75 percent of their students who pass the CHSPE leave school soon thereafter. For the purpose of broad calculations, the following assumptions were made:

- Fifty-seven percent of those leaving were eleventh graders, 43 percent were twelfth graders (the statewide proportion).
- Thirty percent of those leaving were from "basic aid" districts (which receive the minimum amount of flat-rate aid per student then in effect) and 70 percent from "equalization aid" districts (which in addition to the flat-rate "basic aid" per student also received a separate category of aid figured on a sliding scale corresponding to individual district assessed valuation and designed to mitigate disparities among districts of assessed valuation per student (this was also the statewide proportion).
- Equalization aid amounts were converted to average

amounts per student for secondary-only districts and unified districts (since there is a separate sliding scale for each, unified being lower).

- Forty percent of those leaving had attended secondary districts and 60 percent unified districts (the statewide proportion).
- The actual numbers of students leaving were reduced by three percent to account for average absenteeism, since state aid is apportioned on the basis of actual attendance.

Further, for the December exam it was assumed that all eleventh graders who passed and left were skipping a year and a half of attendance, twelfth graders only one semester. For the March exam, it was assumed that eleventh graders were skipping one year and that twelfth graders would simply finish out the year, skipping no school at all.

Using these assumptions, it was calculated that CHSPE operations in the 1975-76 fiscal year resulted in a net savings to the state's General Fund, in apportionments that would otherwise have been made to local high schools, of $4,895,361. Even if those students who left school early immediately reenrolled in public colleges, these savings still stand, of course, since they result from a net reduction of the time spent by these students in all public schools. This approximate 5 million dollar savings to the State Treasury was also matched by a very roughly equal amount of unlevied local property taxes.